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**ACPL ITEM
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A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
OLD ENGLISH PORCELAIN.

*This Edition is limited to
Twelve Hundred and Fifty Copies.*

No. 743≡

A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
Old English
Porcelain

And its Manufactories;

WITH AN ARTISTIC, INDUSTRIAL, AND
CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF
THEIR PRODUCTIONS.

BY

M. L. SOLON,

Author of "The Art of the Old English Potter," etc.

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To each of the hitherto unpublished specimens described in the following lists, is added the name of the eminent collector to whom I owe the gracious permission of reproducing it for the benefit of my readers. Reference is also given to the National Museums, where I found much valuable assistance on the part of the learned curators. I cannot bring my work to a close without thanking, once more, those who have so kindly contributed to the completion of this volume, and begging them, collectively, to accept the expression of my sincere gratitude.



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PL. I.

Early China of undetermined
origin.



BOW.

Dish, peacock pattern, in the
Oriental style.



INTRODUCTION.

AT the present day, when china ware has become one of the common-place requisites of the household, we can scarcely realize what sentiments of supreme refinement and priceless value were aroused in the mind of our forefathers by the mere mention of Oriental porcelain. Two hundred years ago few people had had the opportunity of seeing a good example of it; still fewer were those who could boast of having one in their possession. Many, however, had heard of the incomparable ware that came from the East. They knew that its substance was as white and pure as the petals of a lily; that its texture was as dense and translucent as that of the onyx, and as soft to the touch as the nacreous lining of a shell; and also that the colours with which it was enamelled rivalled in brilliancy those that glitter on the wing of a gorgeous butterfly. Lesser merits in an exotic object—the rarity of which still enhanced its marketable value—would have sufficed to render it highly covetable. Familiarity with fine specimens of Eastern porcelain has blunted in us this sense of intense admiration. However passionately a modern collector may profess to love the china in his possession; whatever the

extent of the sacrifices he may be ready to make for the further increase of his treasure, he cannot approach, either in his exaggerated laudatory discantations, or his most extravagant pecuniary prodigality, the infatuation that raged at the time when the marvellous porcelain was beginning to be more easily obtainable in Europe.

Its regular importation into England coincides with the moment when the custom of tea and coffee drinking was being firmly implanted in the higher regions of society. It was accepted as a fact that a full enjoyment of the fragrant beverage could only be obtained when it was sipped out of the very dainty vessels made use of by the Chinese. Such vessels were to be had at any cost. The lady of fashion, fond of surrounding herself with fanciful and valuable trinkets, often showed a marked predilection for the diminutive teapot and handleless cups which composed her choicest tea-drinking equipment. How much more precious, thought she, should be held this lovely Oriental china than any vessel of gold or silver; the richest plate was, after all, always within the reach of the wealthy, and no money could ever buy the like of her favourite set, known to be the only one in existence. At times, she lingered, abstractedly gazing at the singular galaxy of pig-tailed mandarins and almond-eyed damsels that the delicate brush of a native artist had limned on the glossy surface, and her dreamy cogitations conjured up strange visions of fantastic lands.

From the aristocratic circles, where they had been so speedily adopted, the taste for tea drinking and the fancy for the outlandish ware soon spread among the well-to-do classes. A strict watch was kept on the arrival of the East India ships, and their limited cargo of porcelain was rapidly disposed of among a crowd of eager applicants. As the demand went on increasing, something had to be done to regulate a supply that the casualties of intermittent importations could but inadequately satisfy. It was then that the European potter turned his inventive powers towards the discovery of a home-made substitute which might effectually compete with the foreign article and eventually replace it in the public favour.

Such a substitute could possess no more than a delusive likeness to the foreign models, for the component materials of Oriental porcelain were a mystery to all. The potters of Holland, taking their white faïence as a basis for obtaining a fair presentment of the outward appearance of the ware they intended to imitate, strove to improve the brilliancy and limpidity of their stanniferous enamel and the purity of the azure blue with which it was to be decorated. They succeeded in producing such wonderful counterfeits of the Nankin porcelain that, in some instances, a connoisseur can scarcely trust to his eye alone, and he has to take the piece into his hand to make sure of the true nature of the material it is made of.

In England, namely at Lambeth, where it was

attempted, towards the same period, to establish the Dutch manufacture, such a degree of excellence could never be approached. The fashioning of the ware remained rough and clumsy, the blue painting lacked neatness and brilliancy. The Lambeth Delft could not, therefore, be expected to replace Oriental importations. As a novelty, and on account of its cheapness, it enjoyed a short run of success, the factories giving, for a short time, employment to many hands. But it was never patronised by men of taste, and it became rapidly so common and vulgar that we find it referred to in the writings of the times as "the hideous Delft."

The French *faïence*, owing to a superior treatment of manufacture and a more attractive style of decoration, responded more readily to the dictates of the prevailing taste; it was extensively made all over the country. Its technical merits, its decorative aspect, could not, however, save the ware from the sense of vulgarity that was attached to the rough clay of which it was formed.

It is said that at the time when France was at war with Holland, Louis XIV. requested all the noblemen of his kingdom to send their ancestral plate to the mint, as a means to replenish an impoverished exchequer; gaudily-painted *faïence* came handy to replace the departed silver. From this a conclusion had been drawn that the productions of the *faïence* maker had, for ever after, occupied a place of honour in the palaces of the nobility. The statement must not be accepted to the very letter. Such a

high patronage was but the fad of a moment. In his country mansion the Duke and the Marquis made it a passing fashion to eat out of earthen dishes just as they put on hobnail boots to go shooting over their preserves. But earthen dishes and hobnail boots were soon to be discarded. We find a positive evidence of the little value that was set upon the finest dinner sets emblazoned with armorial bearings in the catalogues of the contemporary auction sales, in which they changed hands for a paltry sum. The fad contributed not a little to render Oriental china still more sought after for the adornment of the dresser and the service of the table.

The hankering for real porcelain could not be satisfied with the make-shift of a clever counterfeit. White of surface and gay with variegated colours as was the finest faïence, it was deficient in the most appreciated qualities of the true ware; it lacked translucency and lightness of substance. To be attended with effectual results, the researches of the potter had to be directed towards obtaining these two indispensable qualities.

With the earliest achievements, such as the porcelain of Venice, and that made at Florence under the Medicis, which have no possible connection with the introduction of the manufacture in England, we have no concern here. The first record of an English potter attempting to produce a translucid ware dates from 1671. John Dwight was then making experiments in that direction in his stoneware manufactory of Fulham. His notion

of the technical constitution and partial vitrification of the Chinese body was faint in the extreme; it was, however, a correct one. He made light of the popular belief which was current at the time, and which we find seriously put down in the book of Haudiquier de Blancour and in other technical works, that the constitutive elements of Oriental porcelain were pearl-ash, the shells of oysters and other shell fish pounded and mixed together; a compound which could only be used after it had remained for one hundred years buried in the earth. Dr. Plot reports, in his *History of Oxfordshire*, that Dwight, speaking about the Dorset clay, said: "'Tis the same earth China ware is made of, and 'tis made not by lying long in the earth, but in the fire." He must have thought, at one moment, that he was on the verge of discovery, for his white ware showed some translucency in the thinnest parts. All he could produce, however, was a fine stoneware, to which he gave the name of porcelain, just as he called red porcelain the tea-pots of red clay he made as the imitation of the Chinese buccaros. It must be recollected that the term was applied, at that period, to all earthen vessels that differed from common pottery. In that category may be ranged the so-called porcelain of Place, an amateur potter who, in the Manor House at York, conducted some practical experiments highly praised by Horace Walpole. An authenticated specimen of his work is in the Victoria and Albert Museum; it is very similar to the marbled stoneware of John Dwight.

Also the enigmatic ware of one Clifton, of whom Ralph Thoresby said, in 1714, that it was an improvement upon Place's porcelain, and that the inventor made a fortune in the manufacture of it. No example of it has yet been identified.

The most singular instance of perverted ingenuity applied to the invention of a fictitious body of porcelain is found in the process described by A. Hill in the "Essays for the month of December, 1716. Instructions how to make as fine china as ever was sold by the East India Company, by a try'd and infallible method." It consisted in grinding fragments of Oriental china into a fine powder, adding to it a fourth part of the lime obtained by calcining oyster shells, and a little gum water to allow the mixture to be fashioned into all kinds of articles. Such a prescription should not commend itself to the serious consideration of a modern potter, yet we find an unquestionable evidence that the method was actually put into practice, and not without success, in Dossie's *Handmaid to the Arts*, 2nd Edition, London, 1764. One of the contributors refers to it in the following terms: "I have seen at one of the manufactories carried on near London, eleven mills at work, grinding pieces of eastern china, in order, by the addition of some fluxing or vitreous substance which might restore the tenacity, to work it over in the place of a new matter. The ware commonly produced at this manufactory was

grey, full of flaws or bubbles, wrought in a heavy, very clumsy manner."

To understand how it was possible to procure a supply of broken china sufficient to keep eleven mills at work, we must bear in mind that at the beginning of the eighteenth century Oriental china was no longer a rarity in England. Within a few years the East India Company had established a considerable trade in the importation of useful and ornamental articles. Factories had been started in the treaty-ports of China, and a crowd of indigenous craftsmen were busily engaged in making and decorating porcelain for the European markets. The shapes of tea and dinner ware were adapted to foreign requirements; painted decorations, including coat-of-arms, badges, and monograms, were copied from designs sent over from Europe. Judging from what remains of it in England and other countries, the influx of importation must have been enormous.

It is evident that the paramount consideration of the traders had been the cheapness of production. In all cases, the ware is of very inferior quality. We are just witnessing, in regard to our commercial intercourse with Japan, another instance of similar effects resulting from similar causes. Ever since the greedy merchant of Europe has organised in his eastern settlements a crushing system of cheapened manufacture, the quaint and delicate pottery which has charmed our youth does not come to us any more. In its stead we receive huge consignments of

common goods, which can have neither interest nor value for the true lover of Japanese art.

From other sources, pieces of the choicest description still came into the hands of enlightened collectors; but the sudden vulgarisation of what had for so long remained a costly article of luxury might have struck a sad blow to the prestige of Oriental porcelain.

A fresh stimulus for the farther spread of that guileless passion which was, later on, to be called "China-mania," was soon, however, to make its appearance, and fan the smouldering embers into a blazing fire. The amateur's world was taken by surprise by Böttger's discovery of the real hard porcelain. What had been for centuries the hopeless ambition of consummate potters, an apothecary's apprentice had achieved, under the prompting of exceptionally favourable occurrences, with unerring purpose and incredible rapidity. Henceforth the veil which had so long enshrouded the mystery of the translucent ware of the East was lifted for ever; the true porcelain that came out from the Meissen ovens was absolutely similar in substance and equal in merit to the finest examples of Oriental origin.

There was no pretence, however, to present the productions of the Saxony factory under a Chinese disguise, no attempt to palm them off on the unwary public for what they were not. On the contrary, much care was taken by the maker that they should be recognised at a glance. Talented sculptors were asked to

execute models of figures and fancy ornaments in the best style of the period, and no curb was put to the free display of their capricious imagination. In England, as indeed in every country where they penetrated, the Dresden statuettes started a regular craze, and fierce contentions were raised among collectors for the possession of the most novel and exquisite specimens. The boudoirs and drawing-rooms of all people of taste were soon enlivened by a motley gathering of diminutive porcelain personages, mythological gods and goddesses, dainty shepherds and shepherdesses, eccentric pantaloons, harlequins, and columbines, all arrayed in brilliantly-painted attire. Porcelain sconces and brackets garlanded with flowers of the same material, which rivalled nature itself in freshness of colours and tenuity of structure, were attached to the walls; vases and pot-pourris of extravagant shapes and indescribable hues stood upon every available place. Never before had such a bewildering combination of fascinating harmonies and glaring contrasts been seen associated together in the ostentatious decoration of a fashionable interior.

It is needless to say that the foreign manufacturers were reaping a golden harvest, being the only ones who could provide for the gratification of the newly-born taste. British industry was soon to awake to a sense of the immense advantage that could be derived from taking such a profitable trade out of the foreigners' hands, and making an equally creditable article of national manufacture

supplant the German importations on the English market. Yet years elapsed before practical experiments were set on foot to that effect. Whether, at first, some technical researches were privately undertaken by professional potters on behalf of the parties who intended to risk their capital in the establishment of a china manufactory, and whether the surprising facility with which china making seems to have been successfully carried on from the very commencement in several important factories is the outcome of those preliminary experiments, has not yet transpired. What we know for certain is that towards 1745 the china works of Bow and Chelsea, and a few years later those of Derby and Worcester, were in full working order. And—for us a matter of astonishment—such of the productions as we may take as representing the earliest period, far from denoting a manufacture still in its experimental state, are as near technical perfection as was ever to be approached in the best examples made in after times.

In all branches of archæological science the investigations of the historian are especially directed, at the present day, towards the origins. A paramount importance is now attached to the necessity of bringing back the study of a given subject to the opening chapter; a part of the tale that has often been neglected by previous writers. If, for instance, our attention happens to be fixed upon the history of arts and crafts, and particularly upon the introduction of some technical process

which has exerted a marked influence on the evolutions of decorative art, we strive to find out at what time, and by whom the new method was brought out, and to know what difficulties were encountered before the invention reached its complete realisation.

The ceramic student feels somewhat disappointed when he realises that he cannot learn anything definite concerning the probationary stage of the English china factories, and the ordeals they had to go through, before the ways and means of a safe and sound manufacture had been definitely settled.

In the annals of the ancient factories of the continent a large place is occupied by the account of the fitful and abortive trials which preceded a long-deferred success. Nothing of the sort has ever been recorded respecting the earliest venture of the English manufactures. They seem to have started with the command of a technical knowledge which spared them the troubles and failures from which beginners have usually to suffer.

Although their aim was to counteract foreign importation, they wisely refrained from fighting the German potters on their own ground, and trying to produce the true porcelain. They knew that the secret was too jealously guarded in the stronghold of Meissen to be easily obtained; and, besides, they were far from suspecting that the materials, said to be unobtainable, were to be found on English territory.

An artificial china—that is to say an artful composition

in which a mixture of chemical substances incorporated together by fusion, and called a frit, replaced the natural clay used by the Chinese and their imitators—was adopted by them as quite susceptible of a practical application to their requirements. The plan was speedily put into operation, and its successful result exceeded the most sanguine expectation. It was one of the rare instances in which the imitation is, in some points at least, of greater beauty than the original. One cannot say that their choice of such a process had been guided by considerations of greater convenience and facility of production. It cannot be denied that of all the methods ever practised in the ceramic industry, none has ever proved so uncertain and uncontrollable as the manufacture of soft china. So fraught was the process with risks and misadventures that it was gradually abandoned ; and, eventually, as they were no longer needed, its somewhat empirical rules were set aside and forgotten. When, a few years ago, it was attempted to revive the make of old “*Pâte tendre*” at the national manufactory of Sèvres, the original recipes that the contemporary makers had minutely written down were in vain resorted to. After many costly and ineffectual experiments, the scheme had to be given up as utterly hopeless.

The difficulty of producing such a perfectly constituted soft china as the one which was currently manufactured at Bow and Chelsea towards 1745 being thus established, is it not surprising to find that no one seems to have come

forth and claimed the merit of the valuable invention? It is true that patents were applied for, but we see that the applicant is always the manager of the works, who speaks ambiguously as the representative of the small group of shareholders by whom the enterprise was subsidised, in view of protecting their business interests, and not in the tone of a proud craftsman who confidently asserts his rights at being recognised as the sole holder of an important discovery. The trumped-up character of the pretensions of the trade manager is transparent enough. As to the patents that were granted on their application, they were, evidently, without legal value, for several manufacturers were, at the same time, making the very same sort of ware, and yet no complaint for infringement of rights was ever raised against any of them. It is most likely that each company had secured the services of a practical man in possession of all the secrets of the trade—probably acquired abroad—whose experience greatly facilitated the establishment of a regular manufacture. This indispensable man, who appears in all the histories of the German porcelain works under the name of “The Arcanist,” has surely played, in England, an important part in the organisation of combined efforts; but the share that reverts to him in the ultimate success has never been acknowledged. In all cases the *Deus ex Machina* has remained nameless. “Arcanists” were not numerous at the time; it may be that a single personality stands hidden behind the various names credited with the foundation of

a few factories, apparently independent of each other. The last word has not been said on the matter, and we do not despair that some enlightening document will one day bring forth the information that has so far been denied to us. In the meantime, the absence of documentary evidence obliges us to turn to conjectures and institute a comparative examination of the foreign ware to trace the origin of English soft china.

The manufacture of artificial porcelain, or "Porcelaine tendre," had long previously been carried on in France. In 1745, which happens to be the date to which the first patent was granted to the Vincennes factory, it had attained the climax of technical perfection. It originated in the invention of Louis Poterat, a faïence manufacturer of Rouen, who obtained, in 1673, a royal privilege for the sole making of a "translucid porcelain as fine as that imported from China." Wasters and broken pieces dug up from the site of Poterat's works place beyond a doubt the fact that his experiments had been attended with complete success, although it does not appear that the inventor ever derived from their application any profitable result.

It was reserved to the Chicanneaus, of Saint-Cloud, to take a fuller advantage of the discovery, and in 1690, after having regulated the intricate methods of production, to establish the manufacture of soft china upon a firm commercial footing. If the actual link which unites Rouen and Saint-Cloud has not been recorded in history, the striking similarity of paste, glazes, shapes, and style of

decoration presented by most of the specimens made at both places, is more than sufficient to show a community of origin. This similarity goes so far, in some instances, as to render almost impossible the undoubted identification of an unmarked example. In the list of faïence-painters employed by L. Poterat appears the name of one Chicanneau; no other clue should, perhaps, be needed to explain the transference of the process from one place to another.

A decided connection can also be presumed, if not positively traced, between the Saint-Cloud porcelain and that made at Lille by Dorez in 1711, at Chantilly by Cirou in 1725, and at Mennecey by F. Barbin in 1735. In all the productions of the above factories, the paste is of a similar nature. Chemical analysis shows that it differs only in the respective proportions of the same fundamental elements. These slight modifications had been necessitated by the variations of the raw materials that entered into its composition.

One can scarcely admit that each manufacturer had had to discover again such technical secrets as were currently practised in his times, but it may be assumed that the composition of bodies and glazes, as well as their proper manipulation, were probably obtained from a unique source, ready to be put into operation. They came from one of those shrewd and unscrupulous operatives who, during the course of their employment at some well regulated factory, had managed to pick up, by fair or foul means, a sufficient amount

of knowledge to be in the position of offering, against substantial remuneration, a really valuable and effective assistance to whomsoever happened to be in want of their services. To the agency of these migratory adventurers, shifting from place to place, constantly in search of change and lucre, may be attributed the rapid establishment of many of the continental and, subsequently, of the English manufactories. As the paste of the best examples of early Bow, Chelsea, and Worcester is not inferior in intrinsic quality to the finest “*pâte tendre*” of Sèvres, it is not derogatory to either to ascribe to all of them a common origin.

It is not unintentionally that examples of the early china have just been referred to; a standard of technical excellence, which was not long to be maintained, distinguishes the manufacture at its outset. The substance presents a creamy look and a mellow tint, the surface a silky softness no longer to be found in the over-translucent, crudely white body and slippery glaze of the porcelain of later times. Capable of supplying productions of such a superior order, the English manufacturers had good cause to rely on the exclusive patronage of their countrymen, yet they appear to have been somewhat diffident as to the expediency of selling their goods simply on their merit. They copied Chinese decorations and reproduced German shapes. The crossed swords of Meissen, and afterwards the LL of Sèvres were more frequently affixed to the ware than the

distinctive marks they had adopted as their own. Finally, the same want of confidence in the support they could expect from English amateurs induced them to limit their output, at the initial stage, to useful articles of moderate cost and ornamental knick-knacks of small dimension, leaving to their competitors the supply of expensively-decorated tea and dinner services, large vases, and decorative objects of higher pretension.

Whatever may have been the cause of it, it is certain that none of the new china works turned out a financial success. One of the reasons was that, in his struggle against foreign competition, the English manufacturer was placed at a serious disadvantage. His was always a private enterprise; he could only depend on the eventual returns of a precarious venture to eke out an insufficient capital. The continental porcelain manufactories, on the other hand, were almost without an exception carried on at the expense of some noble patron whose pecuniary subsidies made good the losses invariably incurred at the end of the year. Bow, Chelsea, and a few other minor works shared the same fate; the concern, after having passed through several hands in the lapse of a few years, terminated abruptly the course of its chequered existence. Unfortunate as they had been, these short-lived undertakings had, nevertheless, done much to raise china-making in England to the level of a national industry. They were soon replaced by other factories started on the same plan in several localities, but which, it is sad to

say, were most of them also doomed to an untimely end. Among these latter special mention must be made of Plymouth and Bristol. The first-named works, opened in 1768, lasted only three years. It was there that William Cookworthy made the first and memorable attempt at utilisation, in porcelain manufacture, of the china clay and china stone he had discovered in Cornwall a few years previously. To realise the importance of his discovery it may not be unnecessary to call to mind that, so far, nothing but a substitute for the real article had ever been manufactured in England.

Porcelain ware may be, as is well known, divided into two broad groups. One comprises the true or hard porcelain, whose essential characteristic is that it is formed of two organic materials—the kaolin and the feldspar, which supply respectively the body and the glaze, and which are employed almost in the state in which they are taken from the soil. Whether coming from China or Japan, from Meissen or Limoges, the ware is absolutely identical in its fundamental constitution; there is but one kind of hard porcelain. The other group includes the various kinds of artificial or soft porcelain. Instead of having a natural clay as a basis, the soft china paste is grounded upon a complicated mixture of diversified chemical substances. As there is no limit to the choice and combinations of the ingredients by means of which a fictitious body can be produced, the varieties of soft china are, so to speak, innumerable. Indeed, one

may say, paradoxical as it may seem, that all the heterogeneous types which we find ranged under the same heading have but one feature in common; it is that each of them differs more or less widely from the others in its technical foundation.

It was real porcelain, exactly the same as that made in China and in Germany, that W. Cookworthy succeeded in manufacturing at Plymouth. The quality of the ware was as good as could be expected, yet the situation of affairs was by no means prosperous from a pecuniary point of view, when, in 1771, the factory was transferred to Bristol. Richard Champion, who had already begun to make a kind of hard porcelain, probably under a license from the patentee, joined Cookworthy in his new undertaking; soon after, he purchased the patent, resolving to give to the new method of manufacture all possible extension. For one moment it looked as though the making of hard porcelain had a chance of getting firmly implanted in England; but it was not to be. The scheme offered, in this country, some practical difficulties not easily overcome. After a long and conscientious trial had been made of the process, the Bristol factory having been definitely closed in 1781, it was completely abandoned, and no serious attempt to revive it has been made since.

One can scarcely consider as a continuation of the Bristol porcelain the debased productions of the New Hall works, in which a syndicate of Staffordshire potters

undertook to carry on, in 1782, the specifications of the patent they had acquired from Champion. The recipes underwent, in their hands, such modifications as to alter materially the nature of the ware. It was, however, at that moment that Cookworthy's discovery, so far protected by the rights of the patentees, began to yield to the potters' trade a benefit that could not be over-rated. Earthenware received its highest degree of improvement from the use of china clay as one of its chief constituents, and the same material was largely introduced in the composition of a new china body, which was to supersede all others.

The development given to British industry by the discovery of the china clay was not, by the way, limited to pottery. It extended to many other branches of manufacture, not always—if I may be forgiven for saying so—to their incontestable improvement. For instance, its amazingly extensive application to textile and paper-making resulted in such innovations as render, undoubtedly, a chemist glorious and a manufacturer wealthy, but which make the public regret, with good cause, the plain and unsophisticated goods of the old times. The cheap and attractive cotton fabrics to which a single washing leaves nothing but the bare web, and the shining white paper which cannot stand being folded without cracking, owe these undesirable liabilities to the scientific introduction of china clay into the material.

While ineffectual attempts were being made at Bristol

to conquer the difficulty presented by a radical transformation in the methods of manufacture, the Worcester and Derby factories were sedulously preserving, almost in their integrity, the long-tried notions of the early days, and continued to turn out a soft china as fine as it had ever been. Their very existence had, however, been threatened more than once in the struggle they had to sustain against adverse circumstances. It is said that, on some critical occasions, an imminent closing of the works was only averted by a committee of wealthy and patriotic townsmen coming to the rescue with a liberal supply of funds.

With the latter end of the eighteenth century and the name of Josiah Spode, of Stoke-upon-Trent, is associated the memory of an invention which marks the turning-point at which English china, discarding part of its borrowed traditions, assumed a character of its own, and could henceforth boast of possessing technical qualities not to be found in the porcelain of other countries. Towards 1799, a peculiar china body, of which bone ash and feldspar formed the chief components, was constituted by Josiah Spode, second of the name; one could not lay too much stress on the importance of the innovation. It has been contended that the presence of bone ash has been determined by chemical analysis in the china of Bow, Chelsea, and Worcester, and that Spode has no claims, on that account, to be credited with having made use of that material for the first time. The point is easily

granted. The properties of bone ash as a refractory substance resisting the action of silicic acid were well-known by the ancient potters. I may add that the recipe books of John Dwight, of Fulham, testify to the fact that he had often experimented upon it. What cannot be denied is, that by combining bone ash with a purified feldspar extracted from the china stone, and by fixing the respective proportions in which they were allied to a few other materials, Spode produced a porcelain which had no equivalent in all that had been produced before. By bequeathing to his successors a system of manufacture so well regulated that it has stood the test of a century, and has been kept up to now without any appreciable variations, he has won for his name a tribute of gratitude that modern porcelain makers should not refuse to him.

Spode china is usually considered as being a particular form of soft porcelain, and it is, consequently, entered into that class. In reality, it is of a composite nature which scarcely admits of a definite classification. By the composition of the paste—which has nothing in common with the fritted body of the early “*pâte tendre*”—we may take it to be a sort of hard porcelain. A substantial percentage of feldspar, added to a foundation of bone ash and china clay, allows it to be fired at a lower degree of heat than the oriental ware. When covered with a highly fusible glaze, it presents the outward appearance of soft china, and it can be painted with the same colours. To this hybrid constitution it owes technical advantages that

one had not been accustomed before to see associated together. Far from being liable to the many risks and accidents incidental to the practice of the old processes, the new ware was, like hard porcelain, of a relatively simple and safe manufacture. After it had received the work of the painter, and was passed through the kiln for the last time, the fusibility of the vitreous covering allowed the colours to melt and sink into the glaze, imparting to the decoration that gloss and brightness of tints which forms the greatest charm and merit of soft china.

It is easy to understand why the English manufacturers, having once adopted a porcelain offering such sterling advantages, continued to make it, with such improvements as circumstances could suggest, but never thought of looking out for something better.

I do not intend to dwell, in this brief historical survey, upon the individual part played by the later manufactories upon the march and progress of the art or the development of the national ceramic industry. This book being, as its title implies, a *History of Old English Porcelain*, I have to stop the account at a period which is not sufficiently distant from us to be considered as belonging to history. In the following list, the names of the chief English porcelain manufactories, with the date of their foundation, will be found recorded up to 1820. I regret that the line I have traced for my work obliges me to omit the names of the modern manufacturers, which would,

otherwise, have figured upon the list with the greatest credit.

- 1745.—Bow and Chelsea.
- 1751.—Worcester and Derby.
- 1752.—Longton Hall.
- 1756 (?).—Liverpool.
- 1762.—Lowestoft.
- 1768.—Plymouth.
- 1771.—Bristol.
- 1772.—Caughley.
- 1781.—New Hall.
- 1795.—Pinxton and Church Gresley.
- 1797.—Spode (Stoke-on-Trent).
- 1798.—Minton (Stoke-on-Trent).
- 1798.—Coalport.
- 1800 (?).—Davenport (Longport).
- 1803.—Torksey.
- 1810.—Wedgwood (Etruria).
- 1811.—Nantgarw.
- 1814.—Swansea.
- 1820.—Rockingham.

Those which a community of origin link together have been grouped as follows:—

Bow.	Pinxton and Torksey.
Chelsea.	Nantgarw.
Longton Hall.	Swansea.
Derby.	

Worcester.	Plymouth.
Caughley.	Bristol.
Coalport.	New Hall.
	Spode.
Liverpool.	Minton.
	Davenport.
Lowestoft.	Wedgwood.
	Rockingham.

A few remarks on the position that English china occupies in the estimation of foreign collectors shall bring this introductory chapter to a close. The perusal of the best histories of the ceramic art published abroad, a visit to the ceramic museums of the continent, make it manifest that historians and connoisseurs alike have, so far, treated it with inexplicable neglect. In the general works on ceramics—emporiums of knowledge which seem to promise exhaustive information upon every possible point—our most important factories are passed over with a mere mention of the name, or a few indiscriminate particulars, usually borrowed from one unique source, the somewhat antiquated work of Marryat, misunderstood and misquoted. As to the museums, rich as they may be in rare examples of the fictile productions of all the countries of the world, they can show nothing that represents, at least in a worthy form, the merit and variety of the porcelain of England.

It appears so strange—not to say unfair—to see Bow, Chelsea, Worcester, and many other centres of

manufacture, almost ignored, when a large share of attention is granted to continental manufactories of a very inferior standing, that one cannot help venturing some suggestions as to what can be the possible causes of such an undeserved disregard.

One of these causes might, perhaps, be found in a choice of forms, and in a style of decoration not always responding to the squeamish and fitful taste of the French and German amateurs.

It must be acknowledged that the English china painter has not, as a rule, shown himself the equal of his continental rival. He has, at the outset, either merely reproduced designs of foreign origin or else, when trying to introduce a personal interpretation of his models, deplorably exaggerated their worst features. In later times he was prone to give vent to a reckless fantasy, the vagaries of which departed too widely from all recognised notions of grace and elegance in porcelain decoration to be generally accepted.

There were, fortunately, numerous exceptions to that prevailing state of things. Every notable collection of English porcelain contains many examples of national manufacture, evincing, on the part of the painter, signs of a sedate originality, coupled with a true feeling for decorative effect. If we have to go back to the early works of Bow, Chelsea, and Worcester to find such forcible evidences of the capabilities of the decorator, we must remember that foreign productions had also reached

their zenith at a very early period. The moment will come when the specimens I have just alluded to will at last take their due place in ceramic collections, and one may feel confident that their merit will be rather enhanced than overshadowed when they are seen standing side by side with the choicest productions of Sèvres, Dresden, and Vienna.

Moreover, independently from the surface decoration by which porcelain is embellished, or degraded—as the case may be—I scarcely need say that its constitutive material, the paste, possesses an intrinsic beauty of its own that should never be overlooked. The indescribable and pervading charm of a piece of white porcelain—I mean one of the right sort—is not always sufficiently appreciated. A vase of the purest paste, white and unadorned, has highly fascinating attractions. The vitreous opacity of its substance, which lets the ambient light penetrate discreetly into its creamy whiteness, attracts our glance and detains it absorbed in a musing contemplation.

People may be at variance in the valuation of a painting miniatures upon a vase. The collector, scanning with rapturous attention the delicacy of the stippled work, will lavish upon it his enthusiastic praises; the artist, whose ideal of beauty stands far above such a minute and shallow performance, will turn away from it with a complacent smile. But if it happens that an exquisite specimen of the finest porcelain, undefiled by any

questionable attempt at decoration, is submitted to their judgment, there can be but one opinion; if the specimen is really of the highest order, artist and amateur will join in the expression of an unreserved admiration.

If we bring together, for the sake of comparison, a selection of the most excellent representatives of the manufacture of white porcelain in all countries, and confront with them a select piece of undecorated Bow or Worcester, this latter will hold its own against all others for material perfection. I feel sure that, on this ground, if it may be equalled, it cannot be surpassed.

It is not, therefore, to a positive inferiority, either in the style of decoration or in the quality of bodies and glazes, that one may ascribe the indifference with which English china has, so far, been regarded abroad. I prefer to attribute it to a cause which may be stated without casting aspersions either on the merits of our beautiful porcelain or on the good judgment of the foreign collector.

The fact is, that the fine productions of the ancient manufacturers have seldom left the country. They were never made in considerable quantity, and the whole was absorbed by the home market. If, later on, a few odd examples of the best styles appeared in the auction sales, no foreign bidder ever had a chance to secure them against the determined opposition of our appreciative collectors.

Under such conditions, the museums and private

collections have been unable to procure the elements of an adequate representation of the ware; so, in the most complete ceramic galleries of the continent, good English porcelain was, and is still, conspicuous by its absence. A few stray specimens, often of the commonest description, are occasionally exhibited, bearing on their label a name that testifies that Chelsea, Derby, or Worcester have not been left unrepresented. But, in the face of such discreditable evidence, it is not to be wondered at, that historians and amateurs who had not had, as a rule, any occasion to see anything better, came to the conclusion that the study of such an insignificant style of manufacture could be neglected without much loss to the advance of knowledge. This state of things will end as soon as the amateurs of all nations have learned something more about English ceramics, and when a better acquaintance, with examples really worth their attention, has secured for both pottery and porcelain the appreciation and interest they deserve. For the present, it is not quite fair to say that English porcelain is unjustly treated everywhere; the truth is, that out of England it is virtually unknown.

Before proceeding to relate, chapter after chapter, the history of the old manufactories, I must meet any imputation of having given out as my own what belongs to others, by making the candid avowal that I have contributed no fresh materials to the groundwork of the narrative. Every fact, name, date, etc., that shall be

found hereafter has been borrowed from the general works and monographs published by the learned writers, to whom reverts all the credit of having gathered, from original sources, the vast amount of information we owe to their sagacity and perseverance.

In my inability to supplement an already heavily loaded store of particulars of all kinds I gave my special attention to the duty of eliminating from it all that I believe to be incorrect or unnecessary. Much that has been printed elsewhere will not be found repeated here. It goes without saying that, on some obscure points, a conjecture may sometimes be hazarded; but it must always be presented as a conjecture. As to the questionable statements that have, so far, passed muster, albeit implicit reliance could not be placed on them, I will simply pass them in silence, rather than attempt to challenge and confute their more than doubtful accuracy.

Nor will I give any development to the purely scientific side of the subject and supply transcriptions of the technical composition and chemical analysis of the various porcelain bodies. These questions should be treated by a thoroughly competent man, and, besides, they offer but little interest to the general reader. One may consult for special information the few works published in England on ceramic technology, particularly those of Prof. A. H. Church, and the chapter devoted to the subject by W. Burton in his book, *English Porcelain*, London, 1902.

BOW.

CERTAIN signs of a still unsettled state of manufacture peculiar to the early productions of the Bow porcelain works, and which seem to indicate that the first trials for the making of a white and translucent ware in England were conducted at that place, induce me to place it first in the chronological order. Although no record of the actual date of the establishment of these works has come down to us—with the exception of the vague tradition that they were already in existence in 1730—we have, in support of the assumption of this priority over the factories which flourished almost simultaneously, the fact that the first patent relating to the invention of English porcelain was granted to Thomas Frye, one of the managers. The said T. Frye was styled on the epitaph inscribed upon his tomb, “The inventor and first manufacturer of porcelain in England.” Evidence resting upon patents and epitaphs is, however, liable to be contested, and we must take this for what it is worth.

The variations noticeable in the composition of the paste of the early specimens I have just referred to may be attributed to the trials made in view of introducing

PL. II. **BOW.**

**Hexagonal Vase with Chinese
Decoration.**



SCHREIBER COLLECTION, V. & A. MUSEUM.





into it the curious clays and stones which had just been brought over by a traveller from America. It was to the Bow manufactory that the American offered to sell the new materials he had discovered; it was there, where china ovens were already at work, that they were tried by some experienced potter. The result having proved satisfactory, Edward Heylin, a merchant of Bow, and Thomas Frye, a painter of West Ham, entered into partnership, bought a large consignment of the American clays, and took out a patent by which they secured the sole rights of making use of them in the manufacture of porcelain.

The patent was applied for in 1744, and if we consider that china works had been found ready to execute, on the spur of the moment, trustworthy experiments on these unfamiliar substances, we may fairly infer that the works had been in full working order for a few years previously. Nor should we be at a loss to imagine what kind of ware was made there under the management of a practical potter whose name is, unfortunately, unknown to us. It was, in all probability, the same sort of soft porcelain that the makers of Saint-Cloud, Lille, and Chantilly had, long before, vulgarized in France, and the secret of which, having crossed the channel, was chiefly instrumental in the establishment of several English factories. That the technical processes in use at Bow and Chelsea originated from a common source is amply demonstrated by the difficulty we experience in



A better result was obtained by the employment of bone ash, that is to say, the phosphate of lime resulting from the calcination of bones of animals. It was found to be a valuable and safe ingredient, and was largely introduced in the compounds; it was retained in all the numerous modifications introduced by the subsequent manufacturers in the original constitution of the soft china paste.

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One has often ridiculed the apparent absurdity of the old folklore recipe which consisted in calcining oyster shells and similar substances, to obtain the grounding material of porcelain. As this is only one way of procuring phosphate of lime, we may ask ourselves whether there should not be a possible connection between the empirical method recommended by the old writers, and the practical result achieved, on the same chemical basis, by the makers of soft china.

Heylin and Frye were evidently neither versed in chemistry nor conversant with the practice of the potter's trade. The wording of the patents they took out—let alone a most excusable precaution of not disclosing in full the secret features of the process—denotes that they were not yet possessed of a very clear notion of the technical operations that were carried on by the men at work under their purely commercial management. It has been established that no porcelain could have been made of the materials and in the manner specified in this patent. Their share in the enterprise had been

first to plan the scheme, and then to obtain sufficient capital to carry it out. The first step was to secure the services of a craftsman of great experience in those matters. From what he accomplished, we may judge that this man, whoever he may have been, did not fall short of their expectations. They did not consider, however, that the name of the "hireling," whose co-operation had been well remunerated, would ever be worth mentioning. This is, no doubt, the reason why we shall never get at the root of the introduction of porcelain making in England.

Of Heylin nothing is known besides that he was a merchant of Stratford-le-Bow. His name, which appears in the first patent, does not figure in the second one, granted to T. Frye alone in 1749. He did not, however, retire from the firm; small payments occasionally made to him are entered in the account books up to 1758. Thomas Frye has made his mark in the history of English art; many particulars concerning his life and works have come down to us. I regret to say, however, that they throw very little light on his connection with the Bow manufactory, a point on which we possess scarcely any information in addition to the mere fact that he remained for fifteen years the manager of the works.

Born in Dublin in 1710, Frye studied there as a painter, and he had acquired sufficient talent, when he came over to London in 1738, to be entrusted with painting a portrait of Frederick, Prince of Wales, for the

Saddlers' Hall. He was also a good engraver, and produced a few portraits in mezzotint, a process much in vogue at the time, and in which he was, later on, to achieve great success. It would appear, however, that neither painting nor engraving were yielding pecuniary returns sufficient to keep the struggling artist out of difficulties. He had had, in some manner or other, a hand in the formation, or rather transformation, of the Bow factory, and was very pleased to accept the management of it. His position must have been restricted, at first, to an artistic direction, for at that moment, whatever practical knowledge he may have acquired in after time, he could have had no experience as a technical manager. From the date of his entering the porcelain works we lose sight of him altogether. His individual work is merged into the collective production of a large concern; he did not attach his name to the introduction of a new mode of decoration, or even to the authorship of a particular model. He may have painted china with his own hand, but the few pieces bearing the monogram T.F. have been wrongly attributed to him. His two daughters were taught china painting, and worked with him until their marriage. One of them married a china painter named Willcox; we find Mrs. Catherine Willcox engaged by Josiah Wedgwood in 1759, and painting figure subjects at Etruria till 1776, the year of her death.

Having given up his position at Bow, Frye devoted himself entirely to miniature painting and mezzotint

engraving. Between 1760 and 1762 he published about twenty plates, most of them heads of life-size. They are now much valued by collectors.

He died of consumption in 1762, being fifty-two years of age.

Up to 1750 the Bow porcelain works had been carried on as a joint company, but none of the names of the shareholders have ever transpired. At that date, and for ten years after, the names of Messrs. Weatherby and Crowther appear in *Kent's Directory* as those of the proprietors. Under their partnership the manufacture took a great development; it is calculated that it reached its highest point towards 1758.

The works were then giving employment to three hundred persons; ninety of them were painters, "all working under one roof." An account of the yearly production and business returns, extending over a period of five years, is contained in a memorandum book, once in the possession of Lady Charlotte Schreiber. In 1750 the cash receipts were £6,573; they increased steadily from year to year, and had reached £11,229 in 1755. The total amount of sales in 1754 is put down at £18,115. For the disposal of the goods they had a warehouse at St. Catherine, near the Tower, and a retail shop in Cornhill.

From that moment the business began to decline. Weatherby died in 1762, and in 1763 his partner, J. Crowther, was gazetted as a bankrupt. The whole

stock in hand at that moment was sold by auction the year after, but work continued to be carried on at the factory, John Crowther retaining his position as manager. He opened a new warehouse in St. Paul's Church Yard. Prosperity was never to return to the concern, and the year 1776, in which the plant, models, moulds, etc., were sold to W. Duesbury, of Derby, put an end to the existence of the Bow manufactory.

The works stood on the Essex side of the river Lea, close to the bridge. Nothing of them exists on the spot, but a small thoroughfare in the vicinity still bears the name of China Row. It is said that the building had been erected after the model of the Canton porcelain factory, and was called "New Canton" on that account—a statement that no one has ever verified. Two inkstands, of common manufacture, which may have served as advertisements of the firm, bear the inscription, "Made at New Canton," and are dated respectively 1750 and 1751. The name was not, however, finally adopted; we do not see it employed in the advertising notices inserted in the press.

The Bow factory used to draw a supply of well-trained painters and modellers from the pot works of Staffordshire. The inference may be drawn from the following advertisement, dated 1753: "This is to give notice to all painters in the blue and white potting way, and enamellers on china ware, that by applying at the counting-house at

the china-house near Bow, they may meet with employment and proper encouragement according to their merit. N.B.—At the same house a person is wanted who can model small figures in clay neatly.” The advertisement was not published in a London paper, but in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, which was widely circulated in the Staffordshire potteries. The manufacture was not limited to ornamental or richly decorated articles, as the case was with Chelsea; they also tried to supply households with domestic ware. In the sale advertised in the *Public Advertiser*, April 17th, 1757, after the mention of “Services for Deserts, etc., exquisitely painted in enamel,” we find that of “a large assortment of the most useful china in lots, for the use of Gentlemen’s Kitchens, Private Families, Taverns, etc.”

During the early days of china collecting the porcelain of Bow escaped identification for a time; they knew the name, but little more about it. Marryat could only describe one example: it was a milk jug, with a goat and a bee; the same that was found, afterwards, to have been made at Chelsea. A. W. Franks, in the paper he wrote on the subject in 1863, says that he only knew of one piece that could indubitably be assigned to the Bow factory, namely, the Craft bowl in the British Museum. A great variety of workmen’s marks of impracticable interpretation, and the delusive confusion created by the figure of an anchor being used at Bow and also at Chelsea, had retarded the moment when guiding rules

PL. IV. **BOW.**

Jug painted in the Chinese Style.

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SCHFFIBER COLLECTION





for the correct attribution of many unmarked specimens could at last be established.

Such means were fully afforded by the timely discovery that took place in 1867, while excavations were being made on the site of the old works. At a depth of eight or ten feet, the digger's spade broke into a heap of fragmented china, mostly in the biscuit state, but a small part of it showed underglaze decoration painted in blue. It was, obviously, the place on which the refuse of the oven was deposited after the firing. On the same spot, saggars, cockspurs, raw materials, and a find of still greater importance—a large cake of unbaked clay—were also discovered.

The various examples of Bow manufacture of which fragments were found on that occasion may be enumerated as follows:—

White china embossed with the may-flower pattern; also the moulds in which the flowers were pressed before being “sprigged” upon the ware.

Painted china, with a blue decoration roughly painted on the biscuit in a pseudo-Chinese style. Two broken cups, with more elaborate subjects, were the only specimens of painting in colours upon the glaze.

Plain jugs, cups, plates, baskets, and other pieces of useful ware, more or less distorted, cracked, or otherwise injured in the firing; and a large number of embossed knife-hafts.

Ornamental ware was represented by two broken

salt-cellars—one in the shape of a man holding a shell—the other of a shell resting upon a rock, a model that was repeated in almost all the English factories.

Although not one of them was found bearing a distinctive mark, these fragments were of great assistance in fixing the true characteristics of the ware, uncertain up to that moment.

Nothing, for instance, could be more misleading than to compare a piece, presumed to be of Bow manufacture, with the Craft bowl in the British Museum—then the only identified specimen; yet, this was the only advice that could be given to the early collector. This bowl represents the very last period of production. But for the descriptive label affixed to it by the painter, which warrants its authenticity, it would certainly have passed as a work of Chelsea. The translucency of the paste, the limpidity of the glaze, offer no appreciable difference from those we are accustomed to attribute to Chelsea porcelain.

Now that we possess a better acquaintance with the transformations of the Bow manufacture, we understand how much a late work may differ from an early one. A course of experiments conducted, at the outset, for the sake of eventual discoveries, had resulted in a great variety of pastes. We know, however, that in most instances the body is uncommonly hard and scarcely translucent, except in the thinnest parts; the glaze is of a slightly yellowish tint, and it accumulates at the foot of

the piece and between the reliefs of the embossed patterns. It is quite incorrect to say that the early paste was of a nature akin to that of true hard porcelain; the breaking never shows the glossiness of partial vitrification of the mass, by which this latter is easily distinguishable, but the dry and gritty texture of the soft china. Its hardness is due, in some instances, to the ill-calculated introduction of the "Unaker," or American china clay. In the fragments that Prof. Church submitted to chemical analysis it is accounted for by the presence of a large percentage of bone ashes.

In the series of pieces, ornamented with the may-flower pattern in relief, and often left in the white state—a ware made, not exceptionally, but for the current trade—I find the nearest approach to the medium point which stands between extreme hardness and exaggerated translucency; I might almost say to the absolute perfection of the soft porcelain body. In this especial case, the very unevenness of the thick and mellow glaze, the indefinite variegations of which come to break the monotony of the uniformly white field, contribute to increase, in my estimation, the quiet attractiveness of the ware. In saying so, I know that I am disregarding the standard of technical perfection which is the manufacturer's ideal of beauty; the fact is that I look at the combined effects of body and glaze with the eye of an artist, influenced, above all, by the chromatic aspects. White, as well as black, are not for the painter what they are for the generality of people

—a mere negation of colour. Far from it, he feels that the graduated shades of white and black have an inherent quality of their own, which is not only pleasant or unpleasant in itself, but also renders their presence, in the general gamut of tints in which they may have to play their part, harmonious or discordant.

The may-flower pattern had already had a steady run of success elsewhere when it was adopted at Bow. Saint-Cloud had taken it from the Chinese white porcelain of Fuh-Kien, and no other pattern seems to have been there so constantly reproduced. Dresden, and afterwards Chantilly, continued to make it one of their favourite motives of embossed decoration. But none of the productions of these factories had ever equalled, in charm and perfection, a fine example of Bow manufacture. Whenever such a specimen is introduced in a general scheme of decoration, it never clashes with the surroundings; the mellowness and unctuousity of its substance make all other white china appear crude and harsh by its side. An equal superiority of texture is noticeable in the creamy paste of the ware made for the table, namely, in the brown-edged dinner and tea services painted with the partridge and the peacock patterns.

The partridge, or quail, pattern had often done duty on foreign porcelain before it was also tried at Bow. There they continued long to produce it with unabated success. Sir A. Wollaston Franks had assembled

together a number of variations of the same design painted in many European factories, of which they bore the marks. In this curious group the representative of Bow china stood, if I remember rightly, superior to all the rest. The paste was of the highest quality. A free use of a rich vermilion, to which all other colours were made subservient, and its particular treatment in delicate strokes, imparted to the whole an originality of aspect which made one forget that this painting was, as were all the others, only a notion borrowed from a Chinese plate.

The display of a complete service of that ware upon a well-appointed dining table—if such a dream could be realized—would offer an uncommon treat to the eye of all men of taste, and raise a feeling of devouring envy in the mind of all lovers of old china. I cannot imagine any other style of porcelain decoration which could surpass in elaborate simplicity and unobtrusive richness of effect the harmonious combinations of the bright, and yet quiet, colours of this particular service.

Figures and fancy objects, white and painted, were made at Bow, but richly decorated domestic ware predominated largely over purely ornamental articles. According to the statement written after 1752 by the "Undertaker" of the Chelsea manufactory, we find that "the chief endeavour of Bow has been towards making a more ordinary sort of ware for common use." These are, however, the words of a trade competitor wanting to

emphasize the speciality of his firm. As a matter of fact, the contemporary advertisements of the sale of surplus stock of the Bow warehouses mention a large variety of groups, figures, and ornamental items.

Important information concerning the current productions of the works are contained in the memorandum books for 1750-1758, left by John Bowcocke, one of the managers.

The figures which appear in these notes seem to have all been of small dimension and moderate price. They are: Gentlemen and ladies, at nine shillings each; boys and girls; fiddlers and tambourines; shepherds and shepherdesses; Dutch dancers; harlequins and columbines; and also many toys, animals, etc., all equally cheap.

Of more important pretensions is a figure of Minerva; a fine example of it is in the Schreiber collection. The white statuettes of Woodward in the character of "the fine gentleman," and Kitty Clive as "Mrs. Riot" in Garrick's farce of "Lethe," offer the characteristics of Bow paste; they are, however, attributed to Chelsea by some connoisseurs. Doubts are also raised as to the origin of the figures of General Wolfe, John Wilkes, and the Marquis of Granby, by some assigned to Bow, and by others to Chelsea.

At the MacLaren sale in 1899, a pair of exceptional Bow figures fetched £400. The Bow china is decorated in blue under glaze, enamelled in colours, or completed

BOW.

Octagonal Box.

4

Barrow Collection





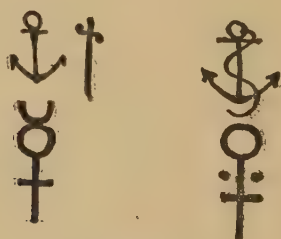
with transfer printing. In all likelihood, this was the first application to porcelain of the method which is known to have originated at Battersea for the decoration of enamels on copper, rather than an imitation of what was done by the same process, a little later on, by Sadler and Green, of Liverpool, and the Worcester manufactory. Printed tea sets are mentioned in the memorandum; a few authentic pieces of Bow are adorned with subjects in transfer printing; the outline of the pattern painted on the draperies of the large figure of Britannia was obtained by that process.

So far, little has been settled as to the means by which the identification of a plausible specimen may be placed beyond a doubt. The parallelism of Bow and Chelsea, a similarity of paste in many cases, the same model known to have been produced at both places, often leaves the task of discrimination not much above guesswork. Nor do the marks affixed upon the ware afford us much assistance for arriving at an undeniable attribution. A great variety of them has been recorded; those that occur most frequently are: An anchor with a dagger, or else an anchor with a twisted cable; both painted in red. These are sometimes accompanied with a capital B, by which they seem fully authenticated. The monogram T.F., seen on white and blue pieces, and said to stand for Thomas Frye, is now proved to be a Worcester mark. The anchor marks leave room for some doubt as to whether many examples so marked, and for

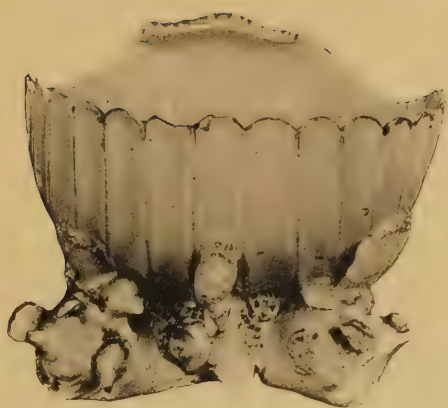
that reason given to Chelsea, should not be restituted to Bow. Other signs in the form of a cross, or a dart with an annulet or a crescent on the top, a bow and arrow, etc., may be workmen's marks or belong to other china factories. Lastly, a large number of pieces of the least doubtful origin bear no mark at all.

In the most important auction sales, where the Chelsea porcelain appeared in quantity, the productions of the Bow factories, of which many examples must have been included, were never designated under the name, before the last few years. Vases of small dimension, decorated in the Dresden style, are not infrequent, but the important and costly vases, covered with highly-finished painting and elaborate gilding—such pieces, in short, as excite the covetousness of the collector—do not seem to have been produced at Bow.

The whole of the documentary evidence referring to the manufactory and its trade, to which we have incidentally alluded, will be found in the excellent notice on Bow published by W. Chaffers in the *Art Journal*, and reprinted in his *Marks and Monograms*.



MARKS.





BOW.

No. 3—White Mug, decorated with the
hawthorn pattern.



THOMAS BOYNTON COLLECTION.



PL. VI. **CHELSEA.**
Vase in the Rocaille Style.

BRITISH MUSEUM

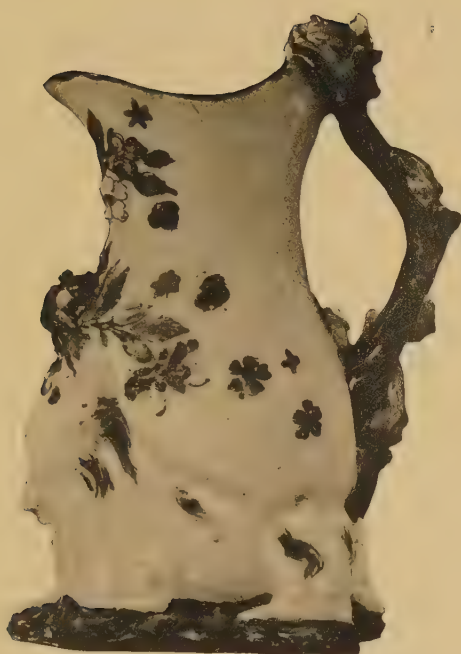


CHELSEA.

No. 4.—The "Bee Jug."

Nos. 5 and 6.—Two Tea-cups in the
Dresden Style.

V. & A. MUSEUM.



CHELSEA.

No. 7.—Bust of George II.

BRITISH MUSEUM.



CHELSEA.

No. 8. Statuette of Marshal Conway.

SCHREIBER COLLECTION.





CHELSEA.

IN London, or, to be more accurate, in the localities which formed, at the time, the suburbs of the metropolis, must be placed the cradle of English porcelain manufacture. From the earliest records of the rise and growth of this artistic industry in the place, we hear that no fewer than four manufactories were in existence at the same time. The most important ones were Bow and Chelsea. If we consider how scanty is the information we possess respecting the exact circumstances of the establishment of these latter, we should not be surprised if of such minor and short-lived factories as Stepney and Greenwich nothing remains but the mere mention of their name.

Chelsea took the lead from the first, and to the end kept at the head of the trade for the artistic and costly character of its abundant productions. They were patronized by the *élite* of the aristocracy of the kingdom. Royalty favoured the works with frequent and important commissions, and the magnificent porcelain services which were executed there by order of the King, to be sent as presents to foreign courts, raised to high repute the name of the English factory in the very

countries where its works had to stand a dangerous comparison with the finest porcelain made in Europe.

Important as the standing the Chelsea factory was to reach, I might say at a bound, the conditions in which it was started have left no traces in the contemporary writings. The works of its potters and artists are, however, numerous and remarkable enough to speak for themselves; and if we have to deplore our imperfect acquaintance with their early history, this cannot lessen the interest we feel for them all, or the admiration we entertain for the choicest examples of the manufacture.

From the original lease of the site of the Chelsea works to N. Sprimont in 1769, published by Mr. W. Bemrose, their exact situation has been finally determined. The plan annexed to the deed shows that they stood at the end of Lawrence Street, at its junction with Cheyne Walk. A few years ago a partial work of excavation on the same spot brought to light the remains of a kiln and a few fragments of china—a discovery that had already almost settled the point.

It is an idle venture to attempt tracing a connection between the Chelsea porcelain works and the glass manufactory established there by some Venetians under the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham in 1676. I scarcely need say that experience in glass making is not conducive to the discovery of the secrets of porcelain manufacture; moreover, although trials had been made at Venice before 1745, in view of imitating the hard

porcelain of Dresden, the regular production of it was by no means settled at that time. The fact of the Anchor, which is a Venetian mark, having been adopted at Chelsea, might have some bearing on the case, were it not that the same mark distinguishes also the ware made at Bow, probably at an earlier period.

If any connection is to be traced between Chelsea and a previously established works, a similarity of paste, models, and marks seem to indicate that a close relation has existed between this and the Bow factory; I have always felt inclined to give the priority to Bow. But, until documental enlightenment is obtained, it will be difficult, I confess, with certainty to decide which of these apparently twin branches is the parent stem.

A duly inscribed and dated piece is the earliest and incontestable evidence of the consummate skill that the Chelsea potters had attained at a time when no reference to the manufactory had yet been made by any contemporary writer. It is a small jug supported by two goats, and having a bee in the natural size placed on the front. The maker has scratched in the clay his personal mark, a triangle, which we find repeated upon several specimens; on one of them he has added the inscription, "Chelsea, 1745." This is by no means a trial piece, for in quality of paste and finish of workmanship it equals the works of the best period.

After such a speaking testimony of its existence in 1745, the repeated mention of the factory, which

appeared in print at a later date, have but a secondary interest, except in the cases when the notices throw some light upon the history of the works and the conditions under which they were carried on.

Of some importance, for instance, is the advertisement inserted by S. Stables, a china dealer of St. James' Street, in the *General Advertiser* of January 29th, 1750, from which we extract the following:—"My china warehouse is not supplied by any other person than Mr. Charles Gouyn, late proprietor and chief manager of the Chelsea House, who continues to supply me with the most curious goods of that manufacture."

From this, the earliest public notice that J. E. Nightingale could meet with in his search for trade advertisements in the newspapers of the time, we learn that Charles Gouyn had been the first head of the Chelsea concern. He is supposed to have been of French or Flemish origin; but we remain in ignorance as to whether he was or was not a practical potter. It is known that most of his skilled workmen came from France and Germany, and it was he who, in 1747, caused Aaron Simpson and six other potters of Burslem, in Staffordshire, to come and work at their trade at the Chelsea works. S. Shaw, who relates the fact in his *History of the Staffordshire Potteries*, adds that "they soon ascertained that they were the principal workmen on whose exertions all the excellence of the porcelain must depend, when they resolved to commence business on their own account at

Chelsea, and were in some degree successful." This pretension was, by the way, unwarranted vanity on their part, for the manufacture was in excellent condition before they came, and continued to be so after they had left.

Charles Gouyn retired from the works towards 1759; but how it was that a year after he could have been able to supply a London shop with the goods of a manufactory, the management of which had passed into other hands, and when the new direction declined to have any connection with his warehouse, is an enigma that only those conversant with the subtleties of trade competition could pretend to solve. It is said that the china business had been for Gouyn the source of a large fortune.

The year 1750 opens, for the Chelsea works, an era of well maintained success. Although the foundation of a porcelain manufactory was, as a rule, due to private initiative in England, in this particular case we notice that the semblance of an exalted patronage seems to have presided over the dawning prosperity of the enterprise.

Under the auspices of the Duke of Cumberland, who is credited to have, for a time, taken an actual part in the direction assisted by his secretary Sir Everard Fawkener, the manufacture developed a rapid extension. His Grace had a financial interest in the firm, being part proprietor, but nothing says that, following the example

of the noble and munificent patrons of the continental factories, he had ever to contribute an annual grant of money; the state of affairs was flourishing enough to render such a sacrifice on his part quite unnecessary. His bust, and a statuette representing him as the hero of Culloden, finely modelled and executed in white glazed porcelain, of which several copies are known, remain as a telling record of his passing connection with the undertaking.

The practical management was entrusted to Nicholas Sprimont, who had been chiefly instrumental in constituting the company, which he served, at first in the capacity of director. Shortly afterwards, however, the Duke of Cumberland ceased to have any pecuniary share in the concern, and Sprimont became sole proprietor. From that moment the vitality and fortunes of the Chelsea factory appear to have rested entirely upon Sprimont's guiding spirit and personal exertions. On his retirement, the works lingered for a while and had finally to be closed.

According to the statement made by Rouquet in his *Etats des arts en Angleterre*, Nicholas Sprimont was a Frenchman. Rouquet, himself a Frenchman, had spent the greater portion of his life in England, and we must take him as a reliable authority on that point. Much in the tendencies of Sprimont's artistic direction of the works, the prevailing style of decoration, and the frequent inspirations from the Sèvres patterns noticeable

on the ware made from his designs, or at his suggestion, indicates the French nationality of the manager. Moreover, we possess circumstantial evidences of his keeping up professional intercourse with the porcelain makers of his country. We hear that he sent some samples of the Chelsea paste to be tried, by way of experiment, in the oven built at Bagnolet, near Paris, by the Duke of Orleans, where the chemist Guettard was to obtain, shortly afterwards, the first hard porcelain made in France with the Kaolin of Alençon.

Nicholas Sprimont was a silversmith by trade; he was established as such in Compton Street, Soho, in 1742. Two silver-gilt dishes, with scalloped edges and a rich ornamentation of shells and corals in high relief, now in the Windsor Castle collection, are mentioned by Prof. A. H. Church as having been made by him. In "the case of the undertaker," the anonymous applicant—whom we have good cause to believe to be no other than Sprimont himself—says: "This undertaker, a silversmith by profession, from a casual acquaintance with a chymist who had some knowledge this way, was tempted to make a trial . . ." This part of the statement, by-the-bye, could scarcely be correct, for when Sprimont took the Chelsea works in 1749 from Charles Gouyn's hands, we have seen that it was in full working order, and there was no need of instituting any initiatory trials.

From the second advertisement inserted in the *Daily Advertiser* of May 15th, 1750, we learn that one of the

first steps taken by Sprimont, on his assuming the management, was to disclaim any connection between the new concern and the old one. It was an answer to the notice sent to the press by the dealer Stables, and it ended in these words: "Note, the Quality and Gentry may be assured that I am not concerned, in any shape whatsoever, with the Goods expos'd to sale in St. James's Street, called the Chelsea China Warehouse."

In December, 1750, appeared the first announcement of an auction sale in which English china is especially mentioned. The sale was said to include, together with old Japan China, "curious Dresden and Chelsea figures."

Before the year 1754, although a reference is found to a small depôt in Park Lane, no regular warehouse for the sale of the Chelsea ware seems to have existed in London.

In 1754 began the series of periodical public auctions, by means of which the excess of the annual output was easily disposed of. This method of tiding over moments of pressing difficulties is characteristic of the ways of the British trade. It was the common fate of the porcelain manufactories of all countries to fall constantly into strained circumstances. But when the want of cash had become imperative, while the manufacturer of France or Germany addressed himself to the liberality of some noble patron, in England he had recourse to an auction sale.

A sale by auction of "the entire stock of the Chelsea

porcelain, brought from the manufactory," is advertised by Mr. Ford in the *Public Advertiser*, March 29th, 1754, to take place at his Great Room in the Hay Market for fourteen consecutive days. The undertaker declares that "he will positively not open his warehouse after this till next year." All articles are "warranted to be true enamel"—a recommendation that makes us suspect that some unscrupulous dealers were wont to palm off on the public white china painted over with varnish colours.

At the end of the same year, "the entire stock of porcelain toys was offered for sale." It consisted of trinkets for watches, stick knobs, smelling-bottles, snuff-boxes, etc., and all sorts of minute and dainty nick-nacks, now much valued by the collector.

The second annual public auction was held March 15th, 1755, and fifteen following days. It included epergnes, groups of figures, dessert and dinner services, and a variety of useful and ornamental articles. From the description of the goods, all said to be "painted in enamel," we may gather that they were decorated on white ground. The varied coloured grounds were not yet produced; they belong to the next period.

Of the above sales, catalogues were printed and sold at the rooms, but no copy of either of them has ever turned up. The first catalogue, reprinted by Mr. R. W. Read, is that of 1756. It comprises sixteen hundred lots, among which are found magnificent lustres and epergnes,

jars and vases, richly ornamented with birds and flowers, and four beautiful urns enamelled with cupids representing the seasons. Tureen dishes and other pieces in the shape of fruits, vegetables, and animals in life-size, such as rabbits, hen and chickens, boars' heads, swans, drakes, etc.; also figures and groups of more than forty varieties. A dozen pairs of important jars and beakers are described as being of the fine "Mazareen blue"; and so is a portion of a table service richly decorated with engraved gold.

Six years only had elapsed since Sprimont had assumed the management of the Chelsea works, and the description of the articles entered into the 1756 catalogue, the number of models that had been prepared, as well as the general excellence of the production, show that an astounding result had been accomplished; in this short time the manufacture had been brought up to the highest point it was ever to reach.

So intimately was the progress of the works dependent on the presence and activity of Sprimont, that in 1757, on account of his illness, the annual sale could not take place. Mason, a painter then employed in the place, said that it was closed for two years, the proprietor being reluctant to let anybody act in his place. Notices were sent to the press that, in spite of the manufacture having been much retarded, a warehouse was, nevertheless, opened in Pall Mall for the sale of "several curious things that have been finished" in the meantime. Other

china factories having followed the example of Chelsea and, in 1758, resorted to public auctions for the disposal of their goods, it was deemed expedient, owing to the crammed condition of the market, to postpone the sale which should, otherwise, have been held in that year. Besides, the dispersal of the effects left by Sir Everard Fawkener, who died at the end of 1757, in which was included the large collection of Chelsea porcelain collected during his connection with the works, had given the public a rare occasion of acquiring specimens of the choicest order.

The annual sales were resumed in 1759, the auctioneer being Burnsall, of Berkeley Square. Blue and gold vases, and others of the "pea-green and gold never before exhibited," are the particular features of the contents of the catalogue. The sale was followed by two others in 1760 and 1761, this latter being advertised as the last but one that would ever take place. As coloured grounds were not specified in previous announcements, the introduction of the claret colour, for which Chelsea is justly celebrated, and perhaps the turquoise blue, is ascribed to that period.

Unfair competition was rife at that moment. Spri-mont had to send to the papers his protest against the unwarranted use, made by a dealer established in Piccadilly opposite the Black Bear, of the name of "the Old Chelsea China Warehouse," an establishment with which he declines having any connection.

It is obvious that in 1763, notwithstanding the promises of prosperous stability held out by the brilliant success of the commencement, and, in spite of the strenuous efforts made to the last, all was going from bad to worse with the Chelsea works, and all hopes of ever placing their affairs on a firm footing had to be abandoned. A last sale of two years' production was advertised, and Sprimont intimated at the same time his intention to withdraw entirely from the concern, to dispose of his interest in it, sell the whole plant and the buildings to the highest bidder, and retire "farther into the country." The auctioneer concluded the advertisement by saying: "And as Mr. Sprimont, the sole possessor of this rare porcelain secret, is advised to go to the German spaw, all his genuine household furniture, etc., will be sold at the same time."

In vain a report was circulated, with the view of putting any intending purchaser on his mettle, that the Duke of Cumberland had lately visited the works for the purpose of purchasing them, "that so matchless an art should not be lost." The report, failing to produce the desired effect, was subsequently contradicted; but no offer was made when the factory was put up for sale.

We are not without evidences that porcelain continued to be made on a smaller scale. Sprimont did not leave the town, and, although in failing health, he still paid frequent visits to the factory. Regular sales, however, no longer took place, until the remnant of the old stock

was finally thrown on the market in 1769. Another attempt was made on that occasion, but again ineffectually, to dispose of the business as a going concern.

As may have been noticed, these trade advertisements and auction sales catalogues afford us good means of following the development and transformations of the Chelsea manufacture. I do not think I have given them too large a place in the account. I will add that a searching examination of their contents is indispensable to the collector of English china.

Just after the stock had been disposed of, "the kilns, mills, models in wax or lead, all the manufactured and unmanufactured porcelain"—in short, "all the materials and utensils," as well as the lease of the site—were assigned by Sprimont to one James Cox, who agreed to pay £600 for the whole.

On finding, however, that it would not suit him to embark in the manufacture, J. Cox transferred, in the same year, all his rights to Duesbury and Heath, of Derby, for which he received the total sum of £800. The transaction was finally concluded in 1770, Duesbury having already taken possession of the works. All the documents relating thereto are given in full in W. Bemrose's *Bow, Chelsea, and Derby China*.

Through the proceedings of the litigations which arose in connection with the transfer of the factory, we become acquainted with its practical manager, Francis Thomas. He is said to have enjoyed the full confidence

of his employer, and to have filled his position with credit to himself and to the advantage of the firm. The last we hear of him does not exactly confirm such a good opinion as to his character. Immediately after his death, which occurred in 1770, Duesbury had to sue his executor Burnsall for the return of a large quantity of finished pieces included in the contract made with Sprimont, and said to have been unlawfully appropriated by the late manager.

On commencing business at Chelsea, Duesbury put his own man, Richard Barton, in the place previously occupied by F. Thomas. As it was necessary to retain at least a portion of the working staff, the factory was not actually closed, but for a time there was hardly any work done. L. Jewitt has given transcripts of the weekly bills kept by R. Barton in 1770, and from them we gather that only a few men were employed, chiefly occupied in finishing the ware still remaining in the warehouses.

Such a state of inactivity was not to last long. The mere fact that after the expiration of the lease in 1773 Duesbury applied three times consecutively for an extension, and continued to keep the factory open for ten years more, shows that the business must have become fairly remunerative. It is to that stage that the mark combining the anchor with a capital D should be referred to. This association is usually construed as meaning Chelsea—Derby; yet, it may be that the intention of

PL. VII. CHELSEA.

Vase "Pot pourri" in the Dresden
Style.

BRITISH MUSEUM.



the manufacturer was that it would stand for Chelsea—Duesbury. Instances of it are comparatively rare, the extent of the production at that time having, evidently, been considerably reduced. The Coopers' bowl, marked with a gold anchor, and dated 1779, and the vase of the Jones bequest, evidence the Derby influence on the productions of that period. The same remark must be made about the series of vases decorated with longitudinal bands, which, were it not for the anchor mark, might be ascribed to Derby. However, it was not before 1783 that Duesbury resolved to leave the place and remove all trade appliances, moulds, models, etc., to his Derby manufactory. The kilns were pulled down in 1784, and all objects not considered worth the cost of transport ruthlessly broken and destroyed. And thus the manufacture of porcelain, in or near London, where it had originated fifty years previously, came to an end.

Before we have done with this brief account of the vicissitudes of the Chelsea factory, we must take leave of its eminent director, Sprimont. He retired in affluent circumstances; he had a house in town and a country seat in Dorset, and we hear that he rode in his own carriage. But his health was completely shattered, and he died in 1770. His collection of pictures was sold at Christie's, March, 1771.

II.

Three successive changes in the ways of manufacture are clearly indicated by the modifications introduced in the constitution of the paste; to determine its technical characteristics at each period is of foremost importance to arrive at a correct classification of the ware.

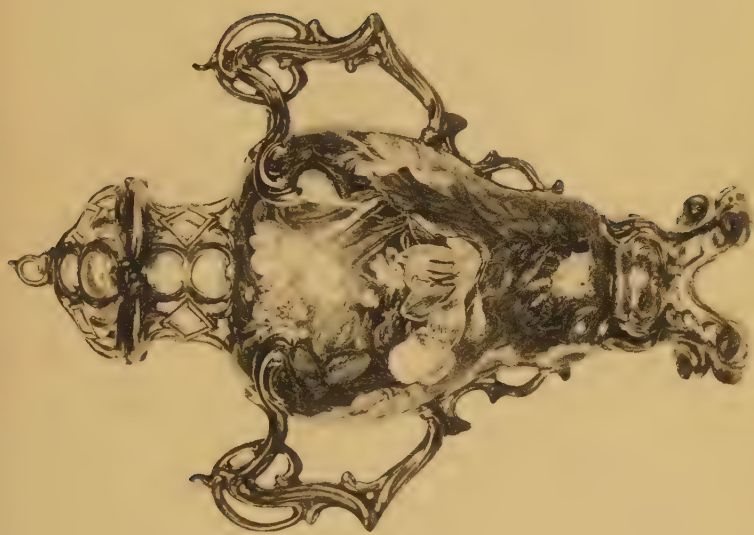
At the outset, the paste had a soft and translucent texture, the glaze offered an unctuous and mellow aspect; it resembles closely that of the early Bow and of the French "*porcelaine tendre*" of Saint-Cloud and Chantilly. In the goat and bee milk-jug, dated 1745, we have an excellent example of the qualities it possessed.

When Sprimont assumed the direction of the works in 1750, he thought it expedient to harden the nature of the body and minimize the risks of the firing by attenuating the fusibility of the original compound. In all probability, he tried to gain that end by an addition of ground porcelain; it is recorded that cartloads of broken oriental china have, occasionally, been seen entering the works. At any rate, the adoption of such a method might account for the opacity of texture, the unevenness of surface, and the exceptional heaviness of the pieces, noticeable in the ware of the second period. The bust of the Duke of Cumberland, the copy of the so-called Palissy figure of a nurse, and sundry white reproductions of Chinese models, are typical representatives of this transformed body. It is not probable,

CHELSEA.

No. 1. Two Vases.

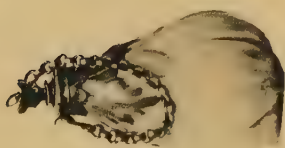
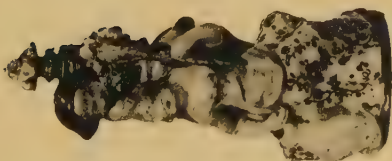
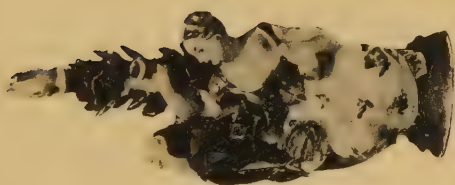
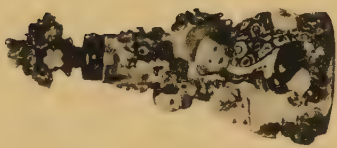
By kind permission of Mr. Geo. H. S.



CHELSEA.

No. 1 Scent Bottles.

J. N. Mitter



CHELSEA.

No. 10. Vase, deep blue ground and white
medallions, painted with
mythological subjects.

FORMERLY IN LORD DUDLEY'S COLLECTION.



CHELSEA.

Nos. 1, and 11 Chinese Figures in a
trellis bower.

FORMERLY IN LORD HENRY THYNNE'S
COLLECTION.



CHELSEA.

No. 15.--Dish, decorated in the Sevres
Style.



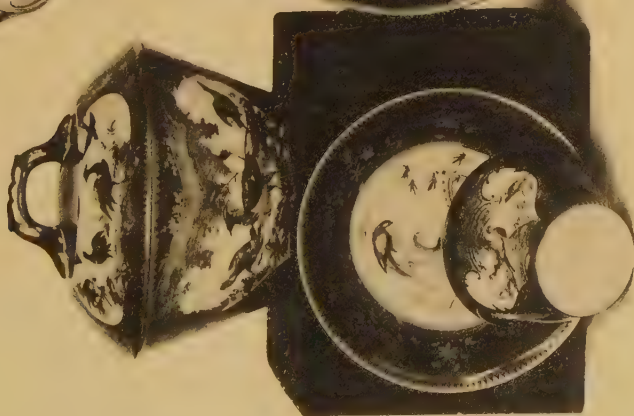
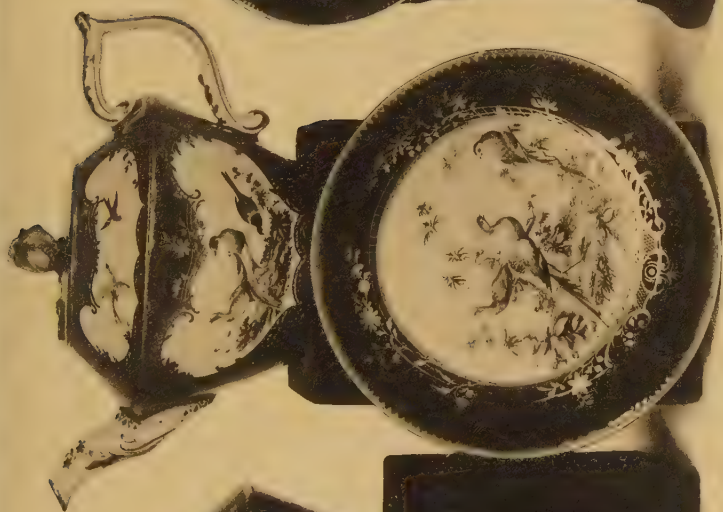
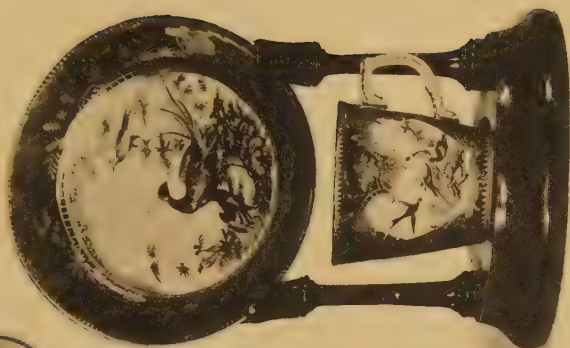
CH. BORRODAILE COLLECTION.



CHELSEA.

No. 10. — Tea-service, richly decorated
gold and colours.

CH. BORRODAILE COLLECTION.



however, that its use superseded the making of the softer china, so superior in many respects. †

Prof. A. H. Church places at the date of Sprimont's return after his illness, in 1759, the adoption of a new paste into which bone ashes entered to the proportion of forty-five per cent., the percentage of fusible frit being considerably diminished. It cannot be denied that by using such a body, the composition of which closely approaches that of modern English porcelain, the fashioning of the ware was much facilitated, and the security of firing greatly increased; but to say that it resembled modern porcelain is also to intimate that it had lost much of the qualities we value so highly in the china of the earlier times.

Colours may also be taken as a guide towards discriminating between the different epochs of manufacture. The brilliant scale of rich tints displayed in the aggregate of the Chelsea porcelain was not introduced all at once. Coloured grounds, "that have never been seen before," as we read in the advertisements, were produced in succession, underglaze blue painting in the style of the oriental ware being at first predominant; to this succeeded the many-coloured enamelling upon white ground, and, lastly, the painting of flowers, landscapes, and figure subjects in framed panels, the ground of the vase being laid in one colour—dark blue, pea green, crimson, etc. Here I must incidentally remark—at the risk of raising a chorus of indignation from the collectors

—that much credit is given to the porcelain maker for the admirable vividness and intensity of the colours he employed, a merit for which his chemical capabilities are not altogether responsible. After the composition of bodies and glazes had been definitely settled, the means of embellishing the ware with paintings in vitrifiable colours were easily obtainable on the market. The blue was sold by the druggist under the name of “Zaffer”; it was a mixture of one part of cobalt against three parts of glass. From immemorial times, the secret of colour-making had been preserved by the enameller and jeweller; it was from that source that the first china painters derived their supply. The nature of the soft china is better adapted than that of any other substance to the development—under certain conditions of firing—of the brightest tints that can be evolved out of some metallic oxides. It is to these causes that is chiefly due the freshness and purity of a china colour. The same one that looks so gorgeous and deep upon a Chelsea piece, will look dull and thin if employed on the Dresden hard porcelain. Occasional improvements have, of course, been the fruit of the potter’s researches, but one may say that, as a rule, his chief trouble was to discover where a certain colour could be obtained ready made.

The secret of gilding on porcelain was not mastered conjointly with the method of painting in enamel; the earliest pieces show no traces of gilding, the edges of

rich table ware being simply lined with brown. Even after the way of fixing it had become a regular practice, gold was for long used very sparingly. It was but late that the process they called "engraved gilding," which is no other than an elaborate burnishing work, was introduced at Chelsea.

III.

Within the lapse of fourteen years—the period that covers the length of Sprimont's active government—no other English porcelain manufactory has ever given signs of a fecundity equal to that displayed by the Chelsea works between 1750 and 1764. A prodigious power of productiveness is evinced, not so much by the enormous quantity of goods which the regular auction sales show to have been the result of one year's work, as by the surprising diversity of models created during the intervals, and the constant innovations brought into the styles of decoration.

Whenever a new model was designed, whether it was a fanciful and costly object purely ornamental, or simply one of the requisites of the dining table, the aim that the artist was told to have in view was to make it attractive and elegant.

Table ware was, of course, an important item in the early production. Imitations of Chinese patterns were at first most in vogue; they were either painted in blue

underglaze, or enamelled in various colours. Among these latter, the one known as "Dr. Johnson's service"—somewhat in the style of the Bow quail pattern—was a great favourite. It is well-known that Dr. Johnson, believing that he had discovered a new method of making porcelain, made some experiments at Chelsea, but without any success. More expensive sets, in the style of painting then prevailing at Sèvres, were subsequently executed. Horace Walpole, writing in 1763, says that he had seen a set of Chelsea porcelain, about to be presented by the King and Queen to the Duke of Mecklenburg, which is to cost £1,200. It was of mazarine blue and gold. A replica of that service was included in the 1754 sale: it sold for £1,150. While speaking of table requisites, I must not omit to mention the curious tureens, dishes, etc., modelled in the shape of leaves, vegetables, fruits, and animals, singular contrivances sometimes verging on extravagance, but which afforded capital ground for the display of colours.

An interesting group is formed by the diminutive toys and knick-knacks, of which Chelsea had made a speciality. They were trinkets for the watch chain, buttons, bottle-stoppers, ladies' thimbles, stick knobs, snuff and patch boxes, detached flowers to be used for decorative purposes, and particularly a series of charming smelling bottles, of which Sir A. W. Franks had formed an almost complete collection. A special sale of these minute toys was made in 1754.

Endless is the variety of figures, groups, and ornamental objects, the models of which had been asked from the best sculptors of the times. Bacon, Roubillac, Nollekens, and others worked for the factory. The first mention of Chelsea figures appears in a trade advertisement of 1750. Groups and figures may have been produced at Bow a little before, but they were, and always remained, wanting in the finish of details. A Chelsea figure, on the contrary, is always remarkable for the sharpness with which the "repairer" has touched up all the parts that came out obliterated from the mould. They may not equal in that respect some of the gems of Dresden and Frankenthal, but, on the other hand, the waxen look of the soft porcelain, the brilliancy of the colours, and the picturesque entanglement of delicate foliage and flowers in which they are embowered, render them often preferable in decorative effect. The largest example is in the possession of Mrs. Lionel Phillips; it is a figure of Britannia standing two feet two inches in height.

With these figures may be classed the rich ornaments in which they are introduced, such as timepieces, sconces, candelabra, lustres, etc. Some of them were of great value; a lustre made for the Duke of Cumberland is said to have cost £600. Chelsea ornaments now command a very high price. At Lord H. Thynne's sale, 1901, a pair of candelabra of scroll design, with stag and leopard attacked by hounds, sixteen inches in height, realized £378.

It was only towards the end that the finest vases were produced. They are consequently of greater rarity than the figures, but as they were always preserved with infinite care by their possessor, the best examples have come down to us. The earliest ones are of "gros-blue" ground, with chased gold decoration, in imitation of the Vincennes porcelain. Then came the varied coloured grounds—crimson, turquoise, pea green, etc.—with medallions cleverly painted with birds and flowers or figure subjects, mostly after Watteau and Boucher, in the manner that had originated at Sèvres. An exuberance of perforations and rococo scrolls give to a Chelsea vase a character of its own which can scarcely be commended as a standard of good taste; yet the general effect is always rich and elegant.

Two fine vases, twenty inches high, are in the British Museum, to which they were presented in 1763 by "a person unknown," known afterwards to be Dr. Garnier.

In the same year, a beautiful vase, twenty-four inches high, superior in quality and of a size larger than any other known example, was presented to the Foundling Hospital by the same Dr. Garnier. The ground was of deep blue, and the vase was painted on one side with a Boucher subject, on the reverse with exotic birds. Although slightly damaged, it was purchased by Lord Dudley for a very large sum. The companion vase, which was in the possession of Lord Chesterfield, was also purchased by Lord Dudley for £2,000. The pair

PL. VIII. **CHELSEA.**

Vase presented to the British Museum
by Dr. Garnier in 1763.



BRITISH MUSEUM.





was again sold in 1886, and reached £4,200. The record price for Chelsea vases was attained last year at Lord H. Thynne's sale, where £3,255 and £5,400 respectively were paid for one pair of vases of dark blue ground, with figure subjects, and a set of four vases of mottled crimson ground, painted with the "seasons" and the "elements" represented by children. This set was especially mentioned in the sale advertisements of 1756.

Mr. Nightingale does not record any of the prices that the Chelsea porcelain commanded at the time when it enjoyed its full run of success. But the extracts he gives from the priced catalogues of a few years later make us aware of the fact that the infatuation for the refined productions of the factory was already on the wane. I shall borrow from his book the following quotations, by which an incredible collapsing of the prices is forcibly illustrated.

1771.—A most magnificent jar and cover, and two bottles old Chelsea mazarine blue, with enrichment chased in gold, £8.

A pair of bottles with dancing figures of equal excellence, £8 4s.

1778.—A pair of figures of Jupiter and Juno in triumphal cars, £5 10s.

A Chelsea carp tureen, 10s. 6d.

I need not multiply the examples; all prices are in proportion to those just quoted.

1819.—This was the sale of Queen Charlotte's collection; owing to the occasion, prices recovered slightly, but they did not represent the full value of the choicest specimens that had been collected by the Queen.

A tureen shaped as a boar's head, and a capital dish finely painted with a stag's hunt, £15 10s.

A pair of superior bottles, with peacocks in gold on mazarine blue, £38 17s.

A pair of timepieces, grotto work, with pastoral figures, £73 10s.

Prices fell again after that memorable sale. With the start of the collecting rage they rose rapidly, and have continued to do so up to the present day. They are now higher than they have ever been, and nothing seems to foretell a coming decline.

If the presence of a mark was sufficient to fix the origin of a porcelain specimen, much of the hesitation which, in other instances, attends the work of identification, would be spared to the collector in the case of the Chelsea ware. It is seldom found unmarked, and the mark is always an anchor of various shapes and colours.

We have seen that the same sign was also used at Bow. No conjecture has ever been advanced that would account for this coincidence. It can be no more than a vague speculation, and it is in that light that I consider the following explanation that has occurred to my

PL. IV. CHELSEA.

Clock adorned with two figures and
detached flowers in porcelain.

W. BEMROSE COLLECTION.



mind. Having many reasons to believe that a single individuality was responsible for the rapid success of both manufactories, could we not take that anchor as the personal mark of the anonymous man who first made good porcelain in one place, and shortly afterwards in the other? Such a suggestion stands, of course, in want of documentary corroboration, but it may be worth noticing that the oldest form of the sign—the raised anchor—which is indifferently attributed to Bow or Chelsea, is impressed in the wet clay by means of a seal, and that the mark presents, on that account, more of a personal than of a generic character, the marine attribute having no connection with either of the works or their geographical situation.

The anchor, which often differs in shape and in size was traced in red, brown, or gold; but there is no reason to accept as a general rule the observation, often made, that a gold anchor denotes a piece of a superior order.

A cursive R incised on some figures is said to stand for the private mark of the sculptor Roubillac.

Notwithstanding the short duration of the palmy days of the Chelsea manufactory—for initiatory preparations and the fag-end of vanishing prosperity take a large place in the account of its history—English museums and private collections are rich in representatives of its finest productions.

We have no cause to regret that such a glorious

existence should have had such a rapid ending. "Those whom the gods love die young." By passing away just at the moment when the taste for all that was capricious, attractive, picturesque, and decorative was being replaced by the stiffness, formality, and dulness of a pseudo-classical style, the Chelsea porcelain has been spared the degradation of falling into the deplorable errors indulged in in after times, and has left us nothing that is not pleasant to the eye and truly consistent with the fitting rules of one of the most transient among the minor arts.

R. W. Read's and J. E. Nightingale's reprints of the sale catalogues are the text books for the study of Chelsea china.



MARKS.

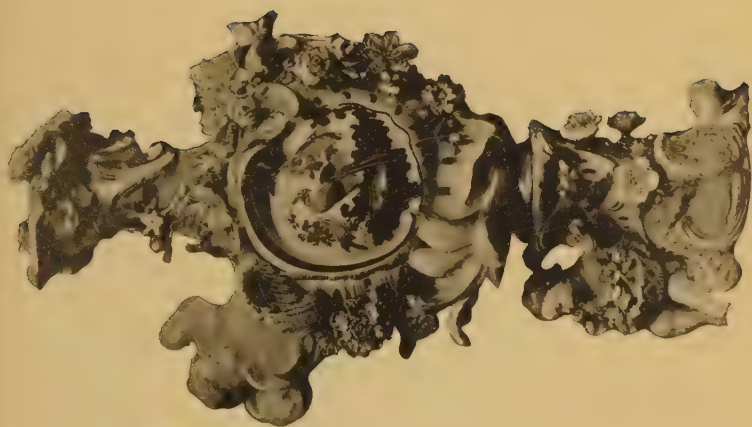
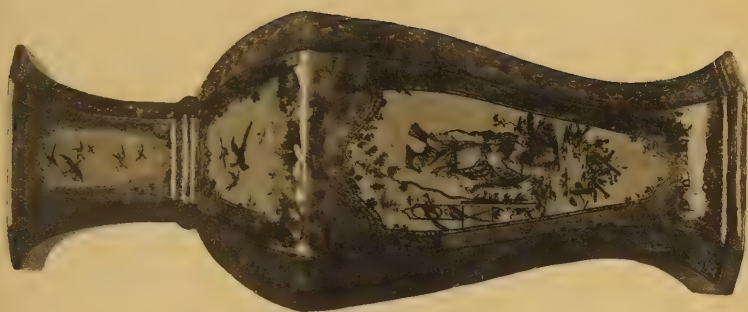
CHELSEA.

Nos. 17 and 18. **Two Vases.**



By kind permission of Mr. George R. Harcourt.

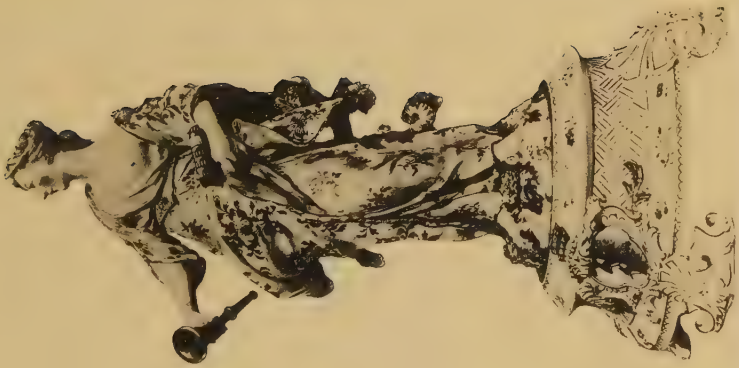




CHELSEA.

Nos. 19 and 20,—Two Figures of Muse
attributed to Roubillac.

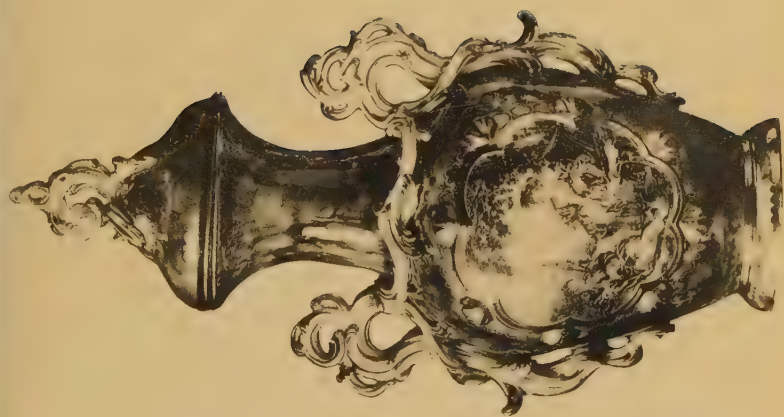
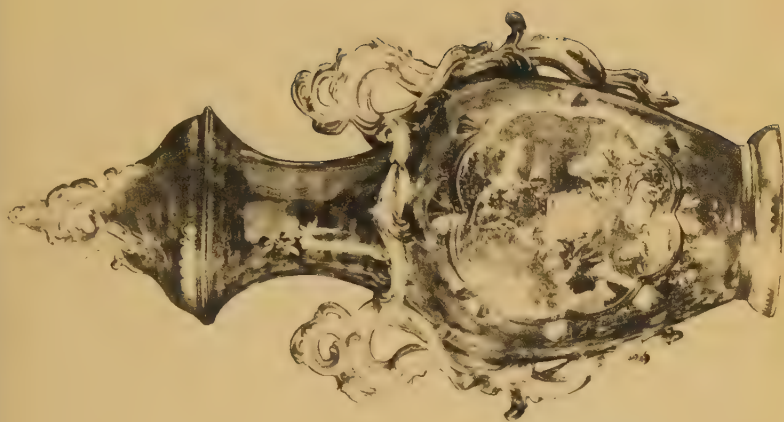
V. & A. MUSEUM.



CHELSEA.

Nos. 21 and 22.—Vase presented to the
**Foundlings' Hospital, and its
companion.**

FORMERLY IN LORD DUDLEY'S COLLECTION



LONGTON HALL.

I.

IN his search through the advertising columns of *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* for July, 1752, Mr. Nightingale dropped upon the notice of the fine porcelain ware made at Longton Hall in Staffordshire, and offered for sale by its maker, W. Littler. Had it not been for that discovery, the name of that manufactory would probably never have appeared in ceramic history, so short-lived was its existence, so insignificant the character of its productions.

A china of a new description and a new set of marks were added to the list of rarities that an enlightened collector should strive to possess. It was soon recognized that although difficult to meet with, examples of the Longton Hall fabric, either authentic or supposed to be, were by no means unobtainable. This was sufficient to put the curiosity hunter on his mettle. Henceforth, no collection of English porcelain could be considered complete unless it included some of these eagerly coveted specimens. The look of the ware was, it is to be confessed, far from attractive, but the technical imperfections, which make it about the worst china ever

produced in England, were complacently ignored by the excited faddist.

So far, we have seen the porcelain factories started by a small association of capitalists securing the services of an experienced manager. In the establishment of the Longton Hall works we find the first instance of a practical potter depending entirely on his private means for the financial support of his risky speculation.

William Littler, the son of a Burslem potter, had just come of age and entered into possession of the patrimony bequeathed to him by his father, when he resolved to invest his small fortune in a daring attempt at establishing the manufacture of soft china in the Staffordshire potteries. Aaron Wedgwood, also a potter, joined him in partnership.

Longton Hall, where they erected their oven and summarily equipped the necessary workshops, is a small mansion of aristocratic appearance, standing in its own grounds upon the brow of a verdant hill, at a short distance from the town. Like the Elers, who, avoiding busy Burslem, had selected the neighbouring but lonely Bradwell Wood farm to be the seat of their mysterious operations, Littler chose to conduct his experimental manufacture in the vicinity of a pottery-producing centre, but took care to be sufficiently far away from the bustle of the streets to guard against the prying curiosity of undesirable intruders.

His plans were to produce at a cheaper cost and sell

PL. X. LONGTON HALL

Jug marked with a
cursive L.

4

SCHREIBER COLLECTION





at a lower rate a china similar to that made at Bow and Chelsea. How he came to obtain possession of the secret processes in use at those places—as he did undoubtedly—has, however, never transpired. The account that S. Shaw gives of his experiments and their result seems to indicate that little attention had been given, at the time, to a precarious enterprise which was not expected to exercise a lasting influence on the staple industry of the district. He speaks of all the difficulties that Littler encountered in his venture; how his porcelain had to be fired with wood—a costly method—because “it could not bear coals”; and how, in spite of all possible care, the ware was often full of bubbles and specks, and always of a greyish hue.

The date at which porcelain was first made at Longton Hall has been variously, but erroneously, stated by local writers. What we know for certain is that in 1752 Littler had made sufficient progress to be able to put his productions on the market and advertise them for sale in the Birmingham papers.

During the following years, his moderate production found a sluggish outlet in the trade of the Midland Counties. An auction sale was attempted in London in 1757, Ford being the auctioneer; but the proceeds were far from reaching the manufacturer's expectations. In the two successive and last sales that took place at London and Birmingham in 1758, the entire stock in hand had to be disposed of at a great loss. The

business had become involved in inextricable difficulties, all assets had to be realized, and the factory was definitely abandoned.

W. Duesbury had taken a passing interest in the concern. We shall see his name appear in the Derby deeds of partnership as "W. Duesbury, of Longton Hall, enameller." If he could not do much to retrieve Littler's affairs from their hopeless condition, on the other hand, he turned his short stay at the factory to some profit to himself. In 1755, he had acquired sufficient experience in the conduct of the trade to be in a position to commence the manufacture of china at Derby on his own account. He knew the value of the moulds, models, and such plant as was left at Longton Hall, and he purchased the whole after the closing of the works.

W. Littler, utterly ruined by his failure, never had another chance to rise again as a manufacturer. He took a modest position as manager of Baddeley and Fletcher's earthenware works at Shelton. Obligated to give up work on account of bad health, he died in miserable circumstances at a very advanced age.

II.

With a few exceptions, the specimens that may be attributed to Longton Hall are apparent imitations of the Chelsea ware. They are, as a rule, clumsily potted and

LONGTON HALL.

Nos. 23, 24 and 25.—A Set of three Vases
in the Chelsea Style.



FRANKS COLLECTION, BRITISH MUSEUM



decorated without taste. Chelsea having manufactured, at certain periods, a large amount of articles of inferior quality, an inevitable confusion exists between these common articles and those of the same order made by Littler. The chief technical disparities that can help us to distinguish the imitations from the original types is that in the former case the paste is of a rather dingy white, and the glaze harder, thinner, and less liable to craze.

The use—we might, perhaps, say the abuse—of a bright cobalt blue laid under the glaze, either in heavy patches or as a whole ground, is also peculiar to Littler's china. Gilding was rarely employed; the medallions reserved for painting are framed with ornamental borders in raised white, after the style of the best Battersea enamels.

From the wording of the sale advertisements we gather that table ware, decorative and useful, was especially manufactured. Richly painted vases were never attempted, but we find the mention of beakers, essence pots, and small vases. Figures appear on the list, but simply as ornamental accessories of fruit baskets and other dessert pieces. Collectors, however, attribute to Longton Hall a few single figures of a heavy and clumsy make.

One tea caddy preserved in the Hanley Museum bears the following label, written in the hand of Enoch Wood: "This was presented to E. Wood by

DERBY.

I.

THE integral amalgamation that Duesbury effected between Chelsea and Derby, when he merged the declining concern into the rising one, merely confirmed a connection which had existed long before his bold scheme had been carried into execution.

Local tradition has handed down the recollection of some "small china figures of animals and other ornaments which were manufactured by a foreigner in Lodge Lane about the year 1745."

Mr. Nightingale has found in the *Public Advertiser* for December, 1756, the notice of an auction sale: "By order of the Proprietors of the Derby Porcelaine Manufactory," which included "A curious collection of fine figures, jars, services for dessert, etc., all exquisitely painted in enamel."

In his book, *Bow, Chelsea, and Derby Porcelain*, Mr. Wm. Bemrose, F.S.A., gives some extracts from the private account book kept by Duesbury when he was established in London as an enamel painter to the trade, between 1751 and 1753, in which the mention of "Darby figures" occurs frequently.

Pl. XL. **DERBY.**

Group of two figures. Subject
after Boucher.



SCHREIBER COLLECTION.





Curiously enough, such apparently conclusive evidence, far from helping us in fixing the date at which porcelain began to be manufactured at Derby, throws a little confusion in the knowledge obtained from other sources, or from a comparative examination of the oldest specimens in our possession. So far, it has not been possible to meet with an unmarked figure—and no Derby mark of a corresponding period has ever been determined—which could not be attributed to Bow or Chelsea.

It has been suggested that some of these unmarked figures might be recognized as representing the work of the first porcelain maker at Derby. I am quite willing, for my part, to accept the suggestion as the best way of getting out of the difficulty. The anonymous maker was evidently working on the same principles as his contemporaries; hence, the likeness that his productions bear to those of the other manufactories. One is usually too prone to consider each factory as having had an independent start. As I have already stated, to discriminate between specimens which may just as likely belong to Bow, Chelsea, or Longton Hall, is such a perplexing task, that the notion of a common origin suggests itself to the mind. If we adopt this as a plausible conclusion, why should we not admit that one more fruitful germination may have sprung up from the same root, and that the name of Derby should be added to those recalled above. Our lack of positive evidence

the deed, but the mention would have been introduced of the kilns, appliances, and models that he brought into the partnership. There is nothing of the sort; he was probably a skilful workman, but his co-operation was not indispensable, and it seems to have been dispensed with.

Duesbury decided to trust to his own knowledge and to begin china manufacture with the assistance of such a staff of experienced workmen as his previous connection with the London factories and the pot works of Staffordshire had placed him in a position to select and engage. In 1756, John Heath advanced the sum of one thousand pounds; and on the Nottingham Road, on a site leased to Heath, ovens were built, and five tenements converted into workshops. In one of the cottages adjoining the factory, Duesbury's father, who had been a currier in Cannock, came to reside after he had made over all his property to his son in return for the latter undertaking to keep him in comfort for the remainder of his life. On the death of the old man, the cottage was pulled down, and Duesbury erected for himself a commodious dwelling-house on the spot.

The capital invested in the enterprise appears to have been scarcely sufficient to meet the requirements; yet, such were the organizing and managing capabilities of the director that under his rule an important and prosperous business was built up upon these modest foundations.

He was able to send to a London sale, conducted by Bellamy in May, 1757, a variety of goods. The advertisement calls attention to "the great perfection of the Derby figures, in particular . . . many good judges could not distinguish them from the real Dresden."

This notice is justly regarded as increasing our perplexity concerning the early Derby figures. All practical potters will agree in considering as very improbable, not to say impossible, that barely one year after the establishment of the factory, a stock of figures could have been ready for sale, especially if models and moulds had had to be made. These lead us to suspect that Duesbury had made use of old moulds, purchased from his mysterious predecessor, and was then manufacturing the very figures that he used to enamel in London for the account of the Derby maker. Notice must also be taken that the same auctioneer, Bellamy, had included Derby figures in the 1756 sale, the year of Duesbury's arrival in the town.

In the *Public Advertiser* for January, 1758, appeared the following announcement: "The Proprietors of the Derby China Company beg leave to acquaint the Nobility and Gentry that they have fix'd their porcelain to be sold by their Factor, Mr. Williams. . . . The great demand made for their goods has encouraged the Proprietors to enlarge their Manufactory, and they have engaged double the Number of hands they used to employ."

The Longton Hall factory had fallen into bad circumstances and was on the point of being closed at that moment. In his restless activity, Duesbury was always on the watch to find fitting opportunities of giving further extension to his undertaking. When Littler's unfortunate venture came to an end, it is said that all that remained of it was annexed to the Derby works; the engagement of part of the workpeople may account for the increase in the number of hands reported in the above advertisement.

During the succeeding ten years no sale took place, and public records tell us nothing about Duesbury and his doings. However, at the date of 1764 he entered into an agreement with Richard Holdship, of Worcester, which shows that he was on the alert to seize any opportunity of improving his manufacture. The transaction has been recorded without comments by the Derby historians, yet its actual drift, when properly realized, is of particular interest. Openly, R. Holdship was selling to Heath and Duesbury the process of decoration by transfer printing; farther on in the deed come a few words about "the secrets of porcelain making." Much has been said about the introduction of transfer printing at Derby, and the last paragraph, the most important one, did not attract any attention.

As far as one may judge, Duesbury cared little for the printing process; in fact, he made very little use of it. But the china he manufactured, like the generality

of the English china of the period, was liable to craze and break when in contact with hot water, and Worcester was then producing a ware which was free from those defects; this was the secret he was anxious to secure.

Holdship, the lessee of Warmstry House, had been one of the founders of the Worcester Porcelain Company, of which he was also one of the principal shareholders; he was, therefore, in the position of knowing much of the secrets of the firm. At all events, the recipes that he delivered to Duesbury in 1764, and which have been printed in the book of R. W. Binns, who had the originals in his possession, are easily recognisable as the very recipes of the Worcester porcelain. They include the formulas of the paste in which the soapy rock of Cornwall entered to a large extent, and of the "Tonkin" opaque porcelain manufactured under the direction of Dr. Wall; Duesbury was to turn them to good profit.

When we see that—notwithstanding the extraordinary precautions that the Company was taking to ensure the secrecy of their manufacturing processes—these processes were sold for a paltry consideration by one of the trusted partners, we understand how easily the so-called mysteries of one factory could pass into another. A traitor could always be found when the bribe was sufficiently tempting. In this case, R. Holdship, the impecunious, the unlucky speculator constantly involved in risky schemes, was the man to apply to, and he proved quite willing to close

that despicable bargain. Moreover, the seller undertook to deliver a sufficient supply of soapy rock at fair prices.

While a large quantity of ware was quietly made and sold on the fast-established lines, the vigilant Duesbury was waiting for his next forward move; when the moment came it found him ready for action. His first step was a gigantic stride. In 1770, the Chelsea manufactory came into the market in good working order, filled with an untold wealth of models and patterns, and having retained many of the skilful operatives to whom it owed much of its former success. Boldly he secured possession of the whole. Business had evidently been prosperous for him at Derby, since he had sufficient capital at his command to complete the purchase and provide for the heavy cost that such an increase of manufacture would necessarily entail. The unification of the two factories was not completed for many years, but it was prepared from the first by the drafting of some of the painters and workmen from one place to the other. Derby remained the head-centre, and Chelsea was conducted as a branch of the chief establishment.

An auction sale, held at Christie's, in April, 1771, disposed of the joint productions of one year's work at both places. The sale lasted four days; the biscuit figures, for the making of which Derby was to become so justly celebrated, appeared in it for the first time.

From 1778 to 1785 annual sales took place regularly; the catalogues have been reprinted by Nightingale. One

cannot form a better idea of the march and progress of both factories than by following the changes introduced from year to year in the contents of these catalogues.

A London warehouse was opened in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, in 1773, a list of the last productions of the firm, comprising 123 numbers, being printed for the occasion. It became a fashionable resort—the King himself favoured it with a visit—and thereby was the business connection greatly extended.

On the Nottingham Road, a well-planned, if not spacious, factory had been erected on the site of the five cottages which had been, at the beginning, converted into workshops. W. Hutton, who saw it as it stood in 1791, says it was “an elegant building, internally replete with taste and utility.”

Another valuable addition to the large stock of moulds and models accumulated by W. Duesbury from various sources was made by the acquisition of all those which had been used by the Bow manufactory before it was definitely closed in 1776. They were immediately transported to Derby.

The transfer of all the available plant of the Chelsea works in 1784, and the arrival of the best artists and workmen who left London for Derby on that occasion, increased greatly the proportions of the manufactory. Indeed, in point of importance it claimed to stand first in the kingdom. Duesbury was not, unfortunately, to live long in the enjoyment of such a happy realization

of his most ambitious schemes. His son, who had for some time assisted him in the conduct of the business, was taken into partnership in 1785. One year after, the founder of the Derby works, then sixty-four years of age, died of paralysis.

The son proved to be a worthy successor to his father. Never had the fame of the Derby porcelain stood so high as it did under the management of William Duesbury the second. It continued to be countenanced by royal patronage. The costly services made for the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of Devonshire and Northumberland, William Pitt, the Margravine of Anspach, and some of the highest personages in the land, were executed at that time. In the midst of his success, young Duesbury, who had always been in delicate health, had to recognize that his strength was not equal to the burden he had to bear; so, to alleviate his weighty labours and responsibility, he took Michael Kean as a partner in 1796. This M. Kean, an Irishman by birth, was a talented miniature painter, and being also a clever designer, he devoted himself to renewing the old-fashioned stock of models, and introducing some novelty in the manufacture. Duesbury survived this arrangement but one year, and departed this world in 1796. He left a son, William Duesbury, third of the name. The heir was only ten years of age at his father's death. Haslem asserts that when he grew into manhood he never took any active part in the business; the firm

was, however, carried on under the name of "W. Duesbury."

Kean was a competent and painstaking man. The works continued to prosper under his direction. He had married his late partner's widow in 1798, but he could never agree with the family. Dissensions and quarrels were constantly breaking out between the interested parties. After years of harassing struggles he left the concern towards 1809 and retired to London, where he ended his days in 1823.

On Kean's retirement, the factory was put in Chancery. It was advertised for sale, and in 1811 it passed into the hands of Robert Bloor, a former clerk and salesman to the firm.

Henceforth, the care for excellence of workmanship and artistic taste began to be neglected, the chief object of the new proprietor being to develop the commercial side and the lucrative capabilities of the enterprise. Cheap articles were manufactured in profusion; a vast accumulation of imperfect pieces, which had been put aside as unworthy of being finished, were hastily made marketable with gold and colours. Altogether, the style of decoration affected a vulgar and showy character. Enormous quantities of ware were consigned to provincial auctioneers in all parts of England, to be rapidly disposed of for what they would fetch. The Derby porcelain having a grand name at the time, much ready money was realized in that way. But if it was a pecuniary

success, the wholesale palming off of inferior or worthless goods upon the public could not fail, in the end, to throw some discredit on the mark. The bad effect of this was seriously felt when Bloor, having become incapacitated through mental derangement, the business was left to linger under the management of the director, J. Thomason.

Bloor had no children living. His grand-daughter had married Thomas Clarke, a corn factor of Derby. This latter took possession of the factory, his wife being the next-of-kin, and he attempted to carry it on a little longer. But the situation was hopeless, so, rather than incur further losses, he discontinued the business in 1848, and sold the whole plant to Samuel Boyle, a china manufacturer of Fenton. It included the complete series of Bow, Chelsea, Longton Hall, and Derby figure models. This priceless assemblage of the artistic productions of four of the best English porcelain works, which it had taken a lifetime to bring together, was dispersed in a few days through the hazards of the auction sale, which took place after Boyle's failure. Most of the Staffordshire potters secured their share of the spoils. The larger part of the moulds and models was secured by Mr. Cooper and Mr. Boot. An ample selection of the best figures was acquired by Messrs. Copeland, who revived them in their Parian body.

All the commercial books and papers, which up to

1848 had been preserved at the factory, were burnt in that year.

With the closing of the old Derby works, the present account comes to an end. I cannot, however, refrain from mentioning the spirited efforts made by W. Locker, in association with a few other employés of the original firm, and after them M. S. Hancock, who, at the new factory in King Street, did all they could to prevent a glorious and profitable industry being lost to the town. A new lease of life has been given to it by the present Royal Crown Derby Porcelain Company—quite an independent enterprise—established in 1888 on Osmaston Road.

II.

The composition of the Derby porcelain was modified several times, but always by the adoption of the technical improvements innovated at other places; consequently, the paste did not develop any characteristics of its own by which it could be easily recognised.

If we know anything of the glazed figures made before 1755, it is that the few examples of them that must still be in existence are, probably, so much like the early Bow and Chelsea figures that to mix them up together becomes quite excusable.

When Duesbury commenced manufacturing at Derby he was so fresh from his experience at Longton Hall

that the china he made could not depart much from the gritted body common to all the English porcelain of the time; it was, therefore, scarcely distinguishable from the other contemporary productions.

A material change was effected by the introduction of bone ashes in the constitution of the paste. The substance had long previously been in use at Chelsea. The method of employing it was brought to Derby, after the Chelsea factory and all the secret processes practised there had been bought by Duesbury. In a memorandum note of the goods sent from London to Derby in 1770, the mention occurs of "ten bags of bone ashes." From that day forth there was no difference in the quality of the porcelain manufactured at both places.

Shortly afterwards, the discovery of china clay led to the last transformation of the body. This was done after china clay and felspar, combined with bone ashes, had been experimented upon by all the porcelain manufacturers. The new ware that resulted from these experiments was very similar in Derbyshire to what it was in other manufacturing centres.

An exception to this lack of distinctiveness in the technique of the Derby manufacture must be made in favour of the biscuit figures of the best period. In any other places, the same body used for glazed ware, vases, ornaments, and services, was employed for making figures or other objects in biscuit. To answer this

DERBY-CHELSEA.

No. 26 —Group of the Roman Charity.





DERBY.

No. 17. Centre Vase, Crown Derby
Mark.



CH. BURRODAILE COLLECTION

1000 feet above sea level
1000



DERBY.

No. 28.—**Biscuit Group, by
J. J. Spengler.**



W. BEMROSE COLLECTION



DERBY.

No. 1. Statuette of Falstaff.

5

SIR ALFRED S. HASLAM COLLECTION.





DERBY-CHELSEA.

No. 40.—Vase, altar shape.



CH. BORRODAILL COLLECTION





DERBY=CHELSEA.

No. 31. — Vase, with landscapes.

SIR ALFRED S. HASLAM COLLECTION.



No. 32. — Vase, with subjects of figures.

By kind permission of Mr. G. R. Harding.





last purpose, Duesbury invented a special paste, whose silky texture and ivory tint was admirably well adapted to statuary reproductions, and which has not since been equalled.

III.

Duesbury, an experienced enameller, must have proceeded at once to enliven his china with gay and brilliant colours; at any rate, we do not know of any specimen painted in blue under the glaze, such as were the staple articles of all the other manufactories at their start, that may be attributed to Derby. To imitate German porcelain was the object he had in view; the first figures that were sent to the London sales were called "Second Dresden," and the mark of the crossed swords was not unfrequently used. In the catalogue of 1756, where they are so described, we also find mention of "services for dessert and a great variety of useful and ornamental porcelain after the finest Dresden models." After that year, and until 1770, this style of manufacture must have prevailed, but the want of documental evidence leaves us somewhat uncertain as to the exact character of the productions. Collectors have, so far, taken little trouble to illustrate what might be called the Pre-Chelsea period by typical representatives. The identification of early Derby specimens remains extremely difficult; many a genuine example of the ware might be found in the

collections wrongly described, and attributed to another place of manufacture.

This raises a question which claims our serious consideration: Was the Derby porcelain properly and distinctively marked from the first? A well-founded certainty that the only mark we know, viz., the capital D surmounted with a crown was adopted at the very beginning, would answer the query in the affirmative. But this has never been established as a fact. On the contrary, it seems rather improbable that a provincial porcelain maker in a small way of business as Duesbury was undoubtedly at that moment, should have had any pretension at displaying the royal emblem upon his ware, while this became his lawful right after the King and the royal family had extended their gracious patronage to his manufactory. If this be granted, the adoption of the crowned D would have followed upon the first visit of George II. to the Bedford Street warehouse, and be posterior to the purchase of the Chelsea works. No earlier mark having ever been connected with the Derby manufacture, we are bound to come to the conclusion that, previously, either the marks of other factories were reproduced, or else that the ware was not marked at all.

After the amalgamation of the two factories, all uncertainty is at an end, for the catalogues of the periodical sales make us acquainted with the description of the best articles that were simultaneously made at both places. No particular Derby style had, as yet, been developed;

Chelsea and foreign patterns were almost exclusively produced.

It is not rare to meet with Derby pieces of that period decorated in a somewhat unprofessional, not to say childish, manner; the Chelsea-Derby painters must not be made responsible for that miserable stuff. A not inconsiderable branch of the London business was to sell to ladies and gentlemen, boasting a taste for art, white porcelain and vitrifiable colours, "with directions how to use them." The ware was thus bought and decorated by guileless amateurs revelling in the confident display of their unskilfulness. We all know what amateur's work is, as a rule; however good the intention may have been, the deed never came up to it. To the ambitious bunglers of that class, these easily recognizable performances should be duly restituted.

In the "list of the principal additions made this year to the new invented Groups, Vases, Beakers, etc.," published by Duesbury in 1773, we find vases of mazarine blue and gold, or crimson ground with centre panels painted with figure subjects, such as were made at Chelsea in the time of Sprimont, and baskets and comports adorned with flowers, in imitation of the Dresden porcelain. The first place is, however, occupied by a set of biscuit figures, an original item evidently prepared for the occasion, and described as follows: "Their present majesties the King and Queen and royal family, in 3 grouped pieces in biscuit—the centre piece represents

the King in a Vandyke dress, on a blue and gold basement," etc.

Biscuit figures were shown for the first time in 1771, but the body of which they were made was not then what it was to be later on. After the last improvements of that body, Derby figures showed a degree of excellence unapproached by any kindred productions. The artists who supplied the models worked, usually, from pictures and engravings in vogue at the moment, consequently, none of their subjects exhibit much invention or originality. It is the careful execution of each copy, and particularly the waxen and mellow appearance of the paste that constitutes their chief merit.

The Derby modellers were most of them of foreign nationality. Pierre Stephan, whose name is one of the first on record, was a Frenchman. He was engaged in 1770, and worked for Duesbury during many years. When he retired to Shelton, he continued to send figures and moulds up to 1795. Rossi, who modelled fine vases, was an Italian. J. J. Spengler, a Swiss, whose groups of the Russian shepherds, the blind beggar, Palemon and Lavinia, and others, are counted among the best ones, came to Derby only in 1790, but he had worked previously in London for Duesbury. The draft of his engagements, given in full by L. Jewitt, show that the pretensions of a modeller in a porcelain factory were not exaggerated. By his first agreement he was to receive £3 3s. a week; but his master declined to employ him

long at this exorbitant rate. When Spengler resumed his work in 1795, his wages had been lowered to four shillings per day of ten hours. Coffee, an English craftsman of some notoriety, who modelled a figure of Lord Howe after the painting by Wright, was only paid 3s. 6d. a day. His charming statuette of a shepherd that we reproduce is taken from the original model in Dorset clay.

Records have been kept of two interesting individualities among the "repairers" or figure makers. One of the earliest, Joseph Hill, marked his work with the same triangle which is incised upon the first dated pieces of Chelsea. The other, Isaac Farnsworth, is spoken of as having been a most clever workman, and he had been employed under the three Duesburys. An incised star, often found on biscuit figures, was his mark.

Classical taste was then in the ascendant. Special mention of tripods, urns, and altars headed all the catalogues. The subjects of the groups and figures were, most of all, borrowed from mythology and ancient history. There was no lack of models of grotesque or familiar figures; these were not, however, produced in biscuit, but glazed and enamelled in colours. The embowered shepherds and shepherdesses of the old Chelsea had had their day, and were no more.

A successful model was made in three sizes; the corresponding number 1-2-3 is found scratched in the paste under the article. The capital B, which sometimes

accompanies the private mark of the maker, stands for Biscuit, and means that the piece was not to be enamelled; it is sometimes mistaken for a Bow mark.

Groups and figures made of the waxen biscuit body of the best period are largely represented in the collections, yet this body was in use for a very short time. The secret of its composition, lost at the end of Duesbury and Kean's partnership, was never recovered.

The painting of the Derby porcelain did not for long free itself from a servile imitation of the Chelsea patterns; but when exotic birds and rococo scrolls went out of fashion, it became imperative to bring some novelty into the conception of the designs. Accordingly, bands of plain colour, combined with garlands of gold foliage, a simple diaper, or a spray of minute flowers, were adopted as the constituting elements of a more sober style of decoration. Small ornaments and table ware treated in that manner are varied and numerous; they are always in excellent taste. From an artistic point of view we find them infinitely preferable to the more ambitious and costly services displaying bulky coats-of-arms, framed within clumsy patches of flat gold and gaudy colours painted upon massive shapes, with scalloped rims edged with heavy beads.

It has to be acknowledged that as a rule the most important and elaborate painted pieces of the late period cannot be commended in proportion to the amount of work and care that has been spent on their completion.

There has always been, in the Derby decorating shops, an efficient staff of painters and gilders who could execute a design with neatness and precision. Their work will long continue to find admirers among the collectors who value a highly-finished treatment above every other quality. The long roll of painters from 1769 has been preserved to us. From among a large number of names one may mention the following:—

F. Duvivier, a Frenchman, who joined the works in 1769. He became the chief flower painter, and his style was imitated for long afterwards.

William Billingsley, apprenticed to the factory in 1774, was considered as the best flower painter of his day. A man of intellectual capacities, he was also a practical porcelain maker, and had a hand in the foundation of the Pinxton and Nantgarw manufactories.

L. Boreman, an old Chelsea hand, excelled in the painting of birds, landscapes, and marine views. He worked at Derby between 1783 and 1794.

William Pegg, the quaker, joined in 1796. He painted flowers and was especially successful in autumn foliage. He was a curious character, labouring under religious hallucinations; Haslem has given many interesting particulars of the life of the man.

Askew's figure paintings are particularly appreciated by collectors.

All these painters, and many others, are well remembered by connoisseurs, and every possessor of a collection

of Derby china is proud to show some specimens of their signed work.

Decorative art was, however, at a low ebb at the end of the eighteenth century. A revolution had taken place in the ruling styles, and the baneful influence of the dictates of the moment was perhaps more sorely impressed on porcelain ware than on the productions of all the other branches of the applied arts. It was bound to be so, for ceramics have always reflected, in an exaggerated manner, the variations that supervened in the tendencies of the public taste.

A misguided impetus given to the study of Greek and Roman antiquities, and a commanding admiration for all that looked classical, had led to the substitution of formal and ungainly shapes for the spirited and elegant fancies of the preceding school of designers. By a strange association of ideas, these so-called antique shapes were decorated with paintings which affected a decided, if not justified, pretension at a realistic representation of nature. Porcelain decoration was no longer decorative and graceful in arrangement, or conventional in treatment. The artist aimed at nothing else but rivalling oil painting. Well-known pictures or engravings, figures, landscapes, or still life, were scrupulously copied in ceramic colours. Under such conditions, when a vase had been provided with a landscape of English scenery, framed within a substantial gold border, and duly inscribed with the name of the place in fair-sized letters, it was not

thought that anything else could be required to complete it but a bit of commonplace gilding. Motives of single flowers, frequently indulged in, were treated with still greater simplicity. A row of natural plants was disposed round a cup or a beaker, or placed separately at the bottom of a dessert plate, with no other attention on the part of the painter than a little care for their botanical accuracy.

The exceptional pieces, such as were made for a special occasion, and upon the pictorial embellishment of which all available resources had evidently been brought to bear, supply us with telling examples of the exact conditions of the taste at that period.

A favourite vase was one in the shape of an inverted bell, resting upon an architectural pedestal, and adorned with rams' heads and acanthus leaves. These accessories often left in white biscuit produced a harsh contrast with the dark blue ground of the body. On the front and back, the best hand in the works had painted some highly-finished landscapes, generally in autumnal tints. The rest of the vase was veined in blue and grey to imitate marble. No judgment is to be passed here upon the decorative merit of such performances; but no doubt an æsthetic lecturer would fain select one of them as an object lesson of what should be avoided in ceramic art.

Under Bloor's management was produced a "Japan pattern," a novelty very remote from any recollection of

an oriental model, but in which blue, red, and gold were combined in a manner well calculated to unite gorgeousness of effect with cheapness of cost. Showy and vulgar as it certainly was, this pattern had the peculiarity of departing boldly from the stiff and frigid look affected by the generality of contemporary designs. To its effectiveness and the want of anything better in the same style, must be attributed an extraordinary run of public favour which is not yet over at the present day.

In advance of their time, in that respect, the heads of the Derby manufactory always let artistic achievements be subservient to commercial interests in the conduct of affairs. Bloor had developed to their utmost extent the paying capabilities of the concern; but the excellence and refinement of the productions had suffered in consequence, so it is as well that we have to leave off the description of the Derby porcelain at a moment when it offers so little artistic interest.

IV.

A crown surmounting a capital D, with many variations of disposition, forms, and colours, is the typical mark of the Derby porcelain. It is believed that the mark was at first painted in blue; later on, purple, green, puce, pink, black, or gold were used, but not exclusively for any lapse of time; colours are not, therefore, an indication of period.

No proof has ever come forth to substantiate the speculative statement that before the adoption of the crown the ware was marked with a single D. On the contrary, the single D appears on undoubtedly late pieces, and, namely, on the Rodney Jug, made in 1782.

The two crossed sticks, with three dots on each side, are said to have been added in 1782; their significance, if they have any, has not been explained. This modified form of the mark is very frequently found; all the work of Billingsley has it invariably painted in purple.

On the biscuit the mark is incised or impressed in the paste, but many pieces show only distinctive numbers, or the private sign of the maker.

The cross swords of Dresden, or the two L's of Sèvres, may scarcely be given as Derby marks, nevertheless, they were occasionally affixed to the ware.

In the early part of his management, Bloor made use of the D and a crown without the jewels on the bows; it was painted in red.

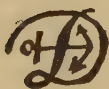
A kind of Chinese incense burner, given by Chaffers, has been, afterwards, reproduced in all the lists of Derby marks. It was taken from a set of five plates of oriental porcelain, painted in China, preserved in the South Kensington Museum; it is not easy to understand how such a mistake could have been made. It is true that Chinese symbols have been used upon imitations of Eastern pattern, but they are of very rare occurrence.

I think it is unnecessary to give facsimiles of the later

marks which bear in full the name of the factory and the manufacturer; when met with they speak for themselves.

A copious collection of documents referring to the history of the works has been printed in L. Jewitt's *Ceramic Art of Great Britain*; J. Haslem's monograph, *The old Derby China Factory: the workmen and their productions*, is full of gossiping recollections of the artists and potters of the late period, gathered from old people, whose fathers and grandfathers had been employed at the works.

D
Derby



MARKS.

PL. XII. **DERBY.**
The Hutchinson Vase.

W. BEMROSE COLLECTION.





DERBY.

No. 33.—Large Jug, with flowers on
ground.

DERBY-CHELSEA.

Nos. 34 and 35.—Pair of Vases with subjects
after Angelica Kauffman.

By kind permission of Mr. G. R. Hard.





DERBY.

No. 16.—Model of the Figure of
Shepherd, by Coffee.

✱

W. BEMROSE COLLECTION.





DERBY.

No. 37.—Plaque painted by Pegg, t
Quaker.

✱

SIR ALFRED S. HASLAM COLLECTION





PINXTON AND TORKSEY.

I.

DURING its short existence, the Pinxton factory—a weakly offshoot of the Derby robust branch—did little more than imitate a good model and abide by the ways and means of manufacture that its founder Billingsley had learned at one place and imported into the other.

Pinxton is a small village of East Derbyshire. In 1796, the year in which the works were established, the Coke family occupied a prominent position in the locality; D'Ewes Coke, the elder, was then Lord of the Manor. John, the second brother, had spent part of his youth in Dresden, where he had developed a keen interest in the manufacture of porcelain. Having discovered on the estate a very fine kind of white earth, and believing that good porcelain could be made out of it, he sent some samples of the material to Duesbury, asking him to try it in his kilns and report upon its adaptability to the purpose. The manufacturer did not attach much importance to the discovery, and

answered that however white and fine any Derbyshire clay might look, porcelain could not be made with it alone; hardly could it enter, in small proportions, into the composition of the paste. John Coke's confidence in the value of the clay was not, however, to be shaken by the expression of an opinion which he did not consider as altogether disinterested; he decided to try it on his own account.

Consequently, he entered into communication with a man who boasted of possessing a perfect knowledge of the recipes and processes connected with china manufacture. It was William Billingsley, who, for twenty-two years had been employed at the Derby works as a flower painter. An ambitious and restless spirit, Billingsley had surreptitiously mastered, one after the other, all the secrets of the trade; he was then waiting for a favourable opportunity of turning his knowledge to good advantage. He came to an agreement with J. Coke, and threw himself, heart and soul, into the enterprise, happy to discard china painting, and to come out in the character of a practical potter, with prospect of a partnership in a prosperous business.

A commodious factory having been built and equipped according to his directions, all being ready to begin work in earnest, Billingsley left his master, Duesbury, and repaired to Pinxton, where he settled with all his family. He had brought with him a number of experienced hands, partly enticed away

PINXTON.

No. 38.—Coffee-can, painted by Billie.

No. 39.—Tea-cup and Saucer, with
scapes in brown.

No. 40.—Mug, with flowers.

No. 41.—Jug, made by Cutts.

E. M. KIDD COLLECTION.



from the Derby works; no time was lost in putting into operation a method of manufacture that had no longer to be tried. If the china he produced differed a little from that made at Derby, it was rather on the side of what was considered as an improvement; it was still whiter and more translucent.

No piece was ever made at Pinxton which had any pretension to rival the artistic productions of the chief factories; the style of painting never rose above the range of good trade work. A small landscape in monochrome, a group of flowers, more often an effective spray of cornflowers, were the designs usually resorted to.

Billingsley, entrusted with the general management of the works, could no longer find time for painting. A few models, executed by his own hand, might have helped the success of the newly-born manufactory, for his skilful treatment of small flowers, and particularly of roses, had been highly appreciated at Derby; but no example of flower painting in his well-known manner has ever been recognized upon any specimen of Pinxton china. None of the assistants, formerly so clever at imitating his style, seem to have practised it at Pinxton.

From the first, the direction of affairs had taken a wrong turn; the result fell very short of what had been anticipated. J. Coke was much dissatisfied with the business abilities of Billingsley as a manager:

the latter had become irascible and intractable; working in concert under these conditions was no longer possible. They parted company in 1801.

In none of the numerous enterprises of the same kind with which his name is associated did the impracticable Billingsley fare any better than at Pinxton. His eccentric life was spent in passing from exulting hopes into bitter disappointment, each stage being marked by an interval of actual want and misery. For long he shifted from place to place, unable to settle anywhere.

His first move was to open at Mansfield—a small town situated seven miles from Pinxton—a workshop for the decoration of china. The ware was bought in the white state from the Potteries and other places, and it was painted by himself and the few men who had stuck to him in his new venture. But the business could not be made remunerative, and it had to be given up. It was at that time that his wife, unable to stand any longer his irritable temper, returned to her family, and left him with his two young daughters. In the Cardiff museum are two specimens of his work—one a covered cup, richly gilt, the other a large jug, painted with a landscape in monochrome, both marked “Billingsley Mansfield.”

We must now return to Pinxton. John Coke retained possession of the works, and the manufacture was continued for a few years under the management

of a Mr. Banks. But the secret of the mixture had only been partially divulged by Billingsley, and the body was no longer of such good quality as it had been. From Coke, the factory passed into the hands of Cutts, a practical potter from Staffordshire. Vainly Cutts attempted to retrieve the situation; after some ineffectual efforts, he saw no other alternative but to close the works in 1818. The ware is sometimes found marked with a cursive P. painted in red.

II.

After his failure at Mansfield, Billingsley migrated to Torksey, in Lincolnshire, where he made a fresh attempt at setting up a china manufactory, in 1803. It was, naturally, conducted on the same lines that had been followed at Pinxton, but the ware, exclusively of the domestic and useful order, was of a still more modest description. His two daughters, Sarah and Lavinia, who had been trained to the trade and had become old enough to be of some assistance to their father, took a large share in the decoration of the Torksey china.

In 1808, deeply involved in pecuniary difficulties, pressed by angry creditors, and reduced to the last extremity, Billingsley took to flight, wandering all over the West of England under an assumed name.

No more porcelain was ever made at Torksey, but earthenware was manufactured in a few small potworks. Examples of Billingsley china are a curiosity, on account of their association with this eccentric character; but as they were never marked, they are of difficult identification. Dr. W. O'Neill, of Lincoln, who has contributed two papers on the Torksey factory to the *Reports of the Associated Architectural Societies*, has in his possession a few authenticated specimens of the ware.

NANTGARW.

No. 42.—Plate, painted by Billingsley.



R. RICHARDS COLLECTION.





NANTGARW.

WOE-BEGONE and resourceless, the erratic Derby painter, Billingsley, accompanied by his son-in-law, S. Walker, and his two daughters, had tramped through the Western Counties in search of employment that they could not find. At last, an arrangement with the Worcester factory secured to them a momentary but safe refuge. The paltry wages they had to accept were no higher than those of "the common hand"; so their constant expectation was to obtain the means of leaving the place as soon as possible. One day, Billingsley disappeared with his family, to be next heard of as settled at Nantgarw, a small Welsh village in the vicinity of Cardiff, under the disguised name of "Beeley." The facility of procuring clay and coals—and a temporary security from his rapacious creditors—had no doubt influenced the selection of that secluded spot.

It would seem that the rolling stone had gathered a little moss during its enforced rest; the head of the party was in possession of £250 in cash, and with such means two small kilns were built and trials at once

undertaken. W. Turner gives 1811 as the date of Billingsley's arrival. Once more his persuasive eloquence induced a small group of capitalists to support his enterprise. The trials went on, partly successful, but without pecuniary result. In 1814, all available funds being exhausted, the partners resolved to petition the Board of Trade for a government grant that would enable them to continue their experimental undertaking. The application was supported by the production of a few specimens of very fine porcelain. Mr. Dillwyn, a pottery manufacturer of Swansea, was asked to report upon it. He repaired to Nantgarw, and witnessed the firing of a kiln. When the ware was taken out, nine-tenths of the pieces were found to have melted out of shape, or to be otherwise damaged to such an extent as to render them altogether worthless. Dillwyn could not help, however, being struck by the fine quality of the paste and the undeniable beauty of the uninjured specimens. He foresaw a possibility of ameliorating a manufacture still on its trial. Billingsley persuaded him that the accidents were chiefly due to the insufficient dimensions of his experimental kiln, and that such mishaps would not occur in a kiln of a larger size; all he wanted was a chance of bringing into execution the numerous improvements he had in view. It was soon settled that working plant and staff, such as they were, would be transferred from

Nantgarw to Swansea, and that china making would be carried on as a branch of the Cambrian Pottery.

There, again, Billingsley produced the fine porcelain of which he possessed the secret, but without any apparent diminution in the percentage of losses. After three years of rambling experiments, no progress had been made towards settling the manufacture upon safe and reliable basis. In 1817, Dillwyn, unable to stand any longer an extravagant waste of time and money, dismissed peremptorily the unsuccessful manager and all his attendants.

They returned to Nantgarw. We cannot help wondering at the facility with which the manufacture of porcelain could, in those times, be relinquished and resumed, apparently at a few weeks' notice. Billingsley's former partner and best flower painter, W. Weston Young, with a few other gentlemen, came again to the rescue with a fresh supply of funds. A marked improvement took place at that moment in the business prospects. The Nantgarw china obtained the patronage of the leading London dealers; they undertook to take as much of it as could be manufactured, and the Prince Regent was induced to order a Nantgarw dinner service. But the factory was a very small affair; the total number of artists and operatives never rose above twenty, twelve of whom were children. So limited was the possible production under the most favourable conditions,

that after having lingered for a couple of years the concern broke down in 1819, the plant and the unfinished pieces being sold by auction. With this, the long course of Billingsley's misconducted schemes and ambitious dreams came to an end. John Rose gave him employment at the Coalport factory, where he worked—it is not known in what capacity—up to 1828, the year of his death.

W. Weston Young, who had purchased what was left of the Nantgarw works, entrusted the practical management to Thomas Pardoe, of Bristol, and tried to maintain, for a time, their precarious existence. In spite of all efforts, the final collapse came in 1822.

Ornamental articles of any importance were never attempted. The regular turn-out consisted, almost exclusively, of table ware, usually decorated with "Billingsley flowers," as the style had come to be called. The chief painters were John Latham and William Pegg, of Derby. W. Young, departing from the accepted manner, showed a partiality for single flowers which he copied, most minutely, from the plates of the best botanical books. As much of the Nantgarw ware was decorated in London, one cannot connect with the factory the names of all the artists which occur upon it.

The mark was the word NANTGARW written in full. It is said that when the factory was transferred to Swansea, the china continued to be impressed with

the Nantgarw mark. If so, it is probable that the letters CW, which sometimes accompany the name of the place, were added at that moment to signify "Cambrian Works," and that they distinguish the ware made at Swansea under Billingsley's management.

SWANSEA.

L. W. DILLWYN was in possession of the Swansea earthenware works—a prosperous little factory, established since 1764—when, as has been previously related, he arranged that Billingsley, Walker, and all their assistants should come and work at his place. It is, then, in the year 1814 that porcelain was made for the first time at Swansea. This commencement is also the period at which the production was at its best. The china did not differ from that made at Nantgarw; it showed the same whiteness and translucency of paste, but none of the fire-risks which rendered its manufacture so unprofitable had been minimized when it was carried on in the new establishment. By increasing the proportions of the glassy frit entering into the composition of his Pinxton body, Billingsley had intensified the qualities for which his ware was deservedly admired, but it had been at the expense of its stability during the process of firing. A porcelain of the same description could have been made on that principle by any manufacturer willing to stand a regular loss of ninety per cent. on each oven. One may understand, however, that Dillwyn,

SWANSEA.

No. 43.--Plate, painted by W. Pollard.

R. DRANE COLLECTION.



No. 44.--Coffee-cup of classical shape.

V. & A. MUSEUM.



after three years' experience of that sort, became anxious to put an end to such ruinous proceedings. Billingsley, at his wits' end, could find nothing better. Walker, who had taken the conduct of experiments into his own hands, produced a body of a more compact texture; but it had a yellowish tint and was of great opacity. This was declared unsatisfactory. Just as he wanted a pretext for cancelling the contract, Dillwyn received a letter from Flight and Barr, in which "the party calling themselves Walker and Beeley" were charged with having clandestinely left their engagement at Worcester, and a request was made not to give them employment at Swansea. The master seized with alacrity this welcome opportunity, and on the strength of that complaint, incontinently dismissed the whole "party."

After 1817, a porcelain of inferior quality, grounded on Walker's last compound, continued to be manufactured under the direction of Timothy Bevington, one of the shareholders and acting manager of the earthenware department. He became the sole proprietor in 1820; but the works were not more prosperous in his hands than they had been under his predecessor, and china making was totally abandoned in 1823. The remaining stock of Swansea porcelain was removed from the factory into some adjacent premises and offered for sale to private purchasers.

Besides the artists mentioned in connection with Nantgarw, the following worked at Swansea: Baxter, a general painter, who had come from Worcester; Th. Pardoe, Pollard, Moriss, and Bedow, flower painters; De Junic (?), a French decorator from Paris; Reed and Isaac Wood, both modellers, the latter a native of Burslem; and a few minor artists.

A full appreciation of the Billingsley ware is, I fear, enjoyed only by the exclusive collector who prefers avoiding to submit the object of his predilection to a close comparison with some of the best examples of other origin. It is obvious that anyone who places the standard of porcelain beauty in its extreme whiteness and translucency will find the most perfect embodiment of his favourite qualities in the Swansea china of the best period. Others, however, may argue on good grounds that its glaring white paste and vitreous translucency are recommendations which, in the general estimation, stand far below the mellow tint and creamy substance of the typical soft porcelain of the early days.

It seems to be taken for granted that the Nantgarw paste is the nearest approach to that of old Sèvres. As a matter of fact, no essential likeness exists between the two; I would fain suggest, on the contrary, that a forcible illustration of the disparities I have just described is afforded by their comparison.

From the artistic and decorative point of view,

the character of a ware manufactured at an epoch when public taste was at a low ebb everywhere, and in a locality far remote from the great centres, was bound to be affected by the baneful influence of these unpropitious circumstances. One must acknowledge that there is little to be commended in the adopted styles of forms and decoration. The shape of all pieces is, as a rule, as stiff and ungainly as it is ill-contrived for convenient use. An excuse was found for their want of elegance in the fact that they gratified the prevailing demand for anything supposed to be inspired from Greek and Roman antiquities. That a cream jug should be made as the presentment of a funereal lamp, and a tea-cup should resemble a cinerary urn, was held to be quite becoming. A few of the models, however, still show embossments of graceful scrolls and flowers, last remnants of the Dresden tradition.

Among the china decorators, Billingsley, with his Derby experience, was looked upon as a consummate artist. The style of painting he had introduced was practised by all his men. It consisted in laying a flat tint for each flower and wiping off the lights with a dry brush. This method, which replaced spirited touches by an almost mechanical process, was greatly appreciated. Much admired was also the cunning device he recommended, always to place a very dark flower by the side of a white one for the sake of

effect—a most aggressive contrast still indulged in by the old professional hands.

Billingsley's easily mastered method was so implicitly followed that his individual work cannot be distinguished from that of his imitators. The larger part of the flowers, and particularly the roses, painted in the factories with which he had a passing connection, are now confidently attributed to Billingsley. On the other hand, it is asserted by the knowing ones that he painted very little, if at all, after he left the Derby factory, and that most of his so-called original work must be credited to his mate, Thomas Pardoe.

The highest effort of the Swansea painter consisted in piling up a random mass of stemless flowers, each of them affecting an unpicturesque front view position. The whole, which is no longer decorative in effect, and not yet realistic in treatment, stands out crudely upon a dark ground and conceals entirely the surface of the china. These unseemly agglomerations are often executed with great care and delicacy, and have a decided pretension of vying with oil-paintings.

Imitations of Sèvres patterns, generally neatly reproduced, are much more acceptable examples of the capabilities of the decorator.

This blunt expression of an artist's opinion might be deprecated as erring on the side of hypercriticism;

but such immoderate praise has been lavished upon the Billingsley china that it seems not unnecessary to remind the infatuated collector that England has produced much better and finer porcelain. Let us keep our well-balanced admiration for the pre-eminent types, the beauty of which can be appreciated by the connoisseurs of all countries, rather than waste it upon works of a secondary order that can add but little to the universal fame of English china.

The marks are the words: Swansea, impressed or painted in red; Dillwyn & Co.; and, later on, Bevington & Co. An impressed trident was added in 1817, and affixed upon the modified paste, too inferior to meet with success.

Much that cannot find place in this brief article will be found on the subject in W. Turner's voluminous work, *The Ceramics of Swansea and Nantgarw*.



SWANSEA



MARKS.

WORCESTER.

I.

AMONG the early factories which by their productive activity secured a steady home market for a porcelain ware of English manufacture, Worcester may claim a foremost place. In point of seniority, however, it must yield precedence to at least three important concerns which forestalled its foundation by a few years.

Not before July, 1751, was the lease of Warmstry House, in the city of Worcester, taken by Richard Holdship, after it had been decided to convert the premises into a porcelain manufactory. At the same date, fifteen gentlemen formed themselves into a company for the purpose of carrying on the enterprise under the name of "The Worcester Tonkin Manufacture"; they signed deeds of partnership which are still in existence. The capital they subscribed was divided into forty-five one hundred pound shares, five of them being presented to Dr. John Wall, physician, and William Davis, apothecary, as a reward "for their discovery of the

PL. XIII. WORCESTER

Hexagonal Vase. Scale blue green
and exotic birds on white panels

DYSON PEPPINS COLLECTION



art and secrets of porcelain making" which they were transferring to the company.

A close analysis of these deeds of partnership suggests a few remarks by which the views so far entertained on the early history of the works may be slightly modified. For instance, it is implicitly accepted, on the authority of a punch bowl, or, rather, a soup tureen inscribed 1751, reproduced by W. R. Binns in his *History of the Royal Porcelain Works*, and a replica of which is given in the accompanying plate, that the production of a ware of excellent quality was in full working order at that date. We need only to recollect that in July, 1751, the alterations required to adapt Warmstry House to the purpose it was to serve had not yet been commenced. Kilns and ovens had to be built, a staff of hands had to be engaged and trained to the work, and, lastly, a few preliminary experiments had to be conducted. All this could scarcely have been accomplished in a few months; consequently, the tureen bearing such an early date may have been an odd trial piece, but surely not a specimen of regular manufacture. It is presumable that the ware was for the first time offered to the public on the occasion of the sale advertised in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1752, "to commence on September 20th at the Music Meeting"; one may add that to have been ready with a marketable stock of porcelain within

such a short space not a moment must have been lost in abortive trials.

The point that comes next under our consideration is whether the two gentlemen described in the act as the "inventors of the art and secrets of porcelain making" should be credited with such a discovery. It is true that Dr. J. Wall was a man of science who had long dabbled in chemical experiments, and particularly tried all kinds of white clays and other substances, with a view of obtaining a fine porcelain body. These experiments had been made in the laboratory of W. Davis, the apothecary, and tradition records that an old iron pot was used in lieu of a kiln. What could have been the practical value of discoveries accomplished under such conditions may be easily conjectured; at all events, the paragraphs of the deeds relating to the secret processes of manufacture do not speak of them as being definitely settled at that moment.

On the contrary, the invention that the Doctor and his friend were contributing as their share in the partnership is very vaguely described in the specification, being merely referred to as "the real, true, and full art" and "the secrets thereof, as far as the said J. Wall and W. Davis are now masters of the same." No schedules of recipes are said to be furnished, but provision is made for the moment when the manufacturing processes shall be definitely settled; it is said that then a full account

WORCESTER.

No. 45.—Large Tureen, marked T. F.



DYSON PERRINS COLLECTION.



WORCESTER.

No. 46.- Sweetmeat Stand.



DYSON PERRINS COLLECTION.



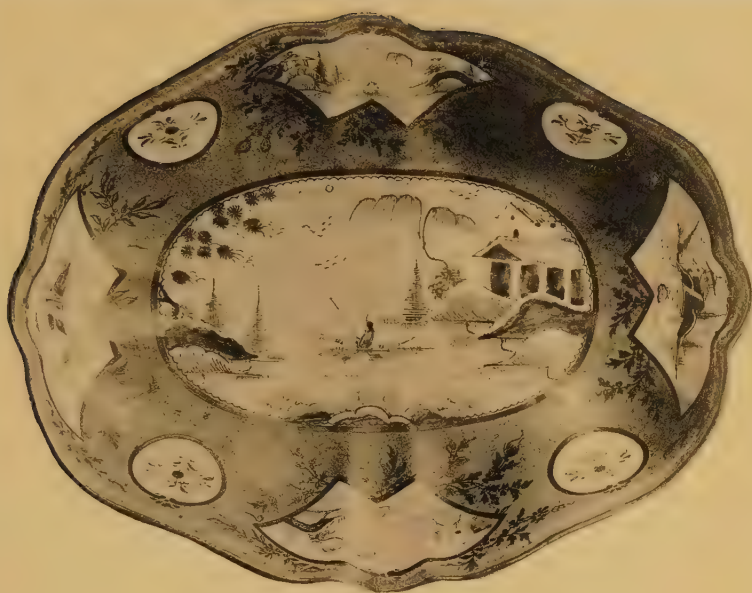
WORCESTER.

No. 47. Dish, with powdered blue
ground.

No. 48.—Dessert Dish in the Dresden
Style.

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R. DRANE COLLECTION.



WORCESTER.

No. 40.- Dessert Dish, with perforated
borders.

DISON PERRINS COLLECTION

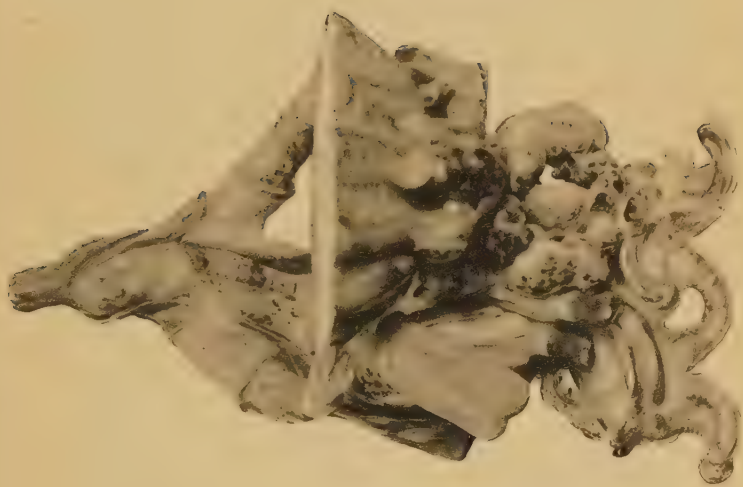


WORCESTER.

No. 10 and 31. Two Figures, with the
Dresden and the Crescent Mark.



DYSON PERRINS COLLECTION



WORCESTER.

No. 5. Large Vase, with classical
subject painted by Donaldson.

IN DRAPPE COLLECTION





of them shall be "fairly wrote out and deposited, locked up, and secured in a box with three different locks." It seems to have been sufficient, at that stage of the enterprise, that the inventors should "bind themselves to discover, for the benefit of themselves and for other subscribers, . . . the mysteries and secrets of the art." Nor is there any mention of some samples of porcelain, the actual work of the promoters of the scheme, having been submitted to the intending members of the Company before the signing of the deed.

A most significant paragraph introduces the names of two skilled workmen, R. Podmore and J. Lyes, to whom special advantages are granted. Great results are evidently anticipated from their participation in the conduct of the work. So much reliance is placed upon their experience and ability that, "to ensure their fidelity," they are promised occasional gratuities and a small share in the profits. We need not be told that the part they were to play was a most material one. Could we discover the name of the place where they had gained their practical knowledge, whether they came from Bow, Chelsea, or any other well-established manufactory, we should then know the source whence the Worcester works derived the means of securing an immediate success.

Dr. Wall and W. Davis were strongly determined to establish by all possible means the manufacture of porcelain in the City. We may readily assume that if

their own trials had proved unsatisfactory from the practical point of view, they wisely resorted to the safe expedient of engaging the services of two well-trained men, conversant with all the practices of the trade. It is not lessening the credit that the directors deserve for having set their factory on a firm business footing, to say that without the opportune engagement of Podmore and Lyes, a long time might have elapsed before fine china had been produced at Worcester.

An advertising notice of the new factory was inserted, in 1752, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, by Edward Cave, the editor, who was also one of the original shareholders of the Company. In the woodcut with which it was illustrated we notice that there was only one biscuit oven, and that the glazing kilns occupied but a small space. As nothing but small articles were at first manufactured, these modest dispositions were quite sufficient to answer the requirements.

Oriental porcelain was at that moment the acknowledged standard to which English china was constantly compared, to the disadvantage and detriment of the latter. The Bow, Chelsea, and Derby ware, beautiful as they were for ornamental purposes, were of little use for the table and other domestic applications, because they could not stand the contact of hot water without cracking. To overcome that defect, and be able to claim for the Worcester porcelain the virtue of withstanding with impunity a brisk change of temperature,

was the aim towards which were directed the earliest efforts of the makers. By introducing a larger percentage of infusible clay, and reducing the proportions of the glassy and fluxing elements entering into the regular mixture, they obtained a paste of much harder density than that of the ordinary English china. With this paste they produced excellent reproductions of Chinese models, first decorated in underglaze blue, and a little later in enamel colours. An advertisement inserted in the *Oxford Journal* in 1763 makes it known to the public that "services of Chinese porcelain can be made up with Worcester porcelain, so that the difference cannot be discovered." And they were not boasting of something that they could not accomplish; there are still in existence some original Chinese tea-sets whose missing pieces have been most admirably matched at Worcester.

In an article published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1764, we read that about two hundred hands were then employed at the factory; nevertheless, we have good reasons to believe that the manufacture was not conducted on a very large scale. Indeed, Mr. R. W. Binns, the best authority on the subject, remarks that for long they worked at Worcester rather like artists than business men; they made beautiful china, but they did not know how to sell it; in fact, W. Davis, who acted as director for many years, could not have known much of the ways of the trade. As for Dr. Wall, he appears

to have been a kind of *dilettante*, a guiding spirit, tracing the lines that had better be followed, dispensing good advice, but having very little to do with the practical management.

Disagreements arose frequently between the members of the company; it came to such a pass that they lost all hopes of ever agreeing together and turning the establishment into a paying concern. We see that in January, 1772, "the genuine process of making Worcester porcelain, together with the factory and plant," was advertised to be sold to the highest bidder. Unaffected by the prevailing scare, Dr. Wall retained his full confidence in the ultimate success of the enterprise. His son, John Wall, bought the works for £5,250, it is said on his father's account. The new company that was then formed comprised the names of Dr. Wall, W. Davis the elder and W. Davis the younger, Rev. Th. Vernon, R. Cook, and R. Hancock, the engraver. The latter retired in 1774, receiving £900 for his share in the business.

After the death of Dr. Wall, which occurred in 1776, the manufactory sank farther into decline. It was then purchased by Thomas Flight, who had long been the agent of the company at the London warehouse in Cheapside. The payment of a sum of £3,000 made him the sole proprietor of the factory, plant, moulds and models, stock in hand, etc.

Under his management, affairs rapidly took a better

turn. Working upon entirely new principles, and neglecting costly productions to develop the manufacture of simpler and cheaper articles, if he did little to enhance the glory of Worcester porcelain, at least Flight inaugurated for it, in this way, an era of commercial prosperity.

The visit of King George III. and Queen Charlotte to the Worcester establishment in 1788 had a considerable influence on the spread of its reputation and the revival of trade. By special warrant, the works were granted the title of "Royal Porcelain Manufactory"; and the spacious and elegant show-rooms that were opened in Coventry Street, W.C., received the constant patronage of their Majesties, the Royal family, and the nobility and gentry in the land.

In 1793, Martin Barr joined Joseph Flight in partnership, the former assuming the direction of the works, and the latter retaining the management of the London business at the Coventry Street Warehouse. The firm was then styled Flight and Barr.

Going back a few years into the history of Worcester porcelain, we find that in 1786 Chamberlain and Son had set up close by, at Diglis, a small china manufactory in opposition to the original works. Robert Chamberlain had been the first apprentice bound and trained by the old company, and he had worked under the successive directions. When he left he was fifty-one years of age; his son was thirty-one. They began by painting and decorating the white ware they bought from Caughley;

it was only when they felt sure of a market that they started manufacturing on their own account.

A ruinous competition carried on between factories producing an almost identical kind of ware could not last long. In 1840, the two firms, Flight, Barr and Barr, and Chamberlain and Co., amalgamated. The entire plant from Warmstry House was transported into the Diglis premises; the mark remained Chamberlain and Co. until 1852.

At that time, Mr. Kerr became senior partner, and was joined by R. W. Binns, who took office as art director. The Diglis works were practically rebuilt by Mr. Kerr, and they have been, since then, considerably enlarged. The present Royal Worcester Porcelain Company owes much of its prosperity to the unerring taste and untiring exertions of its late art director. To form an adequate idea of the changes and improvements he introduced in the manufacture, one must read the book published by R. W. Binns, a year before his death, and which, under the title of *Worcester China: a record of forty-five years*, presents an account of his stewardship.

II.

All the European factories which had resorted to the use of an artificial mixture to produce an ostensible presentment of Oriental porcelain were satisfied with

a product that rivalled the whiteness and translucency of the prototype. Worcester, alone, has endeavoured to impart to the paste an equal hardness of texture. The result of their search came, indeed, very near to the mark. Among the various descriptions of Worcester porcelain some peculiar bodies offer an exceptional degree of density by which they depart frankly from the usual standard of English china, although they cannot be technically classified with hard porcelain.

The rules and recipes fixed by the earlier manufacturers were at first adopted. On these bases, operations for improvement were started. It was a recognised fact that the hardness of the paste was dependent on a higher percentage of infusible clay being added to the glassy fritt. On these principles, Bow had tried a combination into which the "Unaker" was introduced to the extent of eighty per cent.; but for want of a proper fluxing vehicle, the paste they obtained in that way was dry, brittle, and completely devoid of translucency; on that account, the mixture had to be abandoned.

Worcester followed the same course of experiments at the outset, and with no better results. We hear that the "Nankin ware," the pride of Dr. Wall, was of a hard and resisting nature, but quite opaque. By adopting, as chief component materials, the hard and soft varieties of the soap stone, just discovered in Cornwall, the difficulties previously experienced were, however, soon overcome.

The soap stone, or steatite, was found at Mullion,

on the Kempthorn estate, by Thorneloe, towards 1758. Samples of it were by him sent to the Worcester works; they were at once tried, and found suitable for the production of a new body. One of the first tea services made with it was presented to R. Kempthorn, and still remains in the possession of the family.

In 1764, the steatite had become the basis of a much improved paste. The recipes sold, in that year, by R. Holdship to Heath and Duesbury—the shady transaction has been related at full length in the chapter on Derby—leave no doubt in that respect. A first compound is given as made up of about thirty parts of hard and soft soapy stone, against sixty of vitreous fritt and flint glass. In the second one, an opaque body called “Nanquin,” soapy rock and glass are replaced by bone ashes and Barnstaple clay.

Since 1760, Holdship had ceased to be a partner in the firm, yet he appears to have retained a share in the direction of the manufacture, for in 1765 we hear of him making experiments on a new kind of white clay he had received from South America.

So large was the quantity of soapy rock used at that time that Dr. Wall and his partners took the lease of a mine of that material situated at Lanhydrock. Six years afterwards, in 1776, the supply from that source having been found either insufficient or of inferior quality, the Company purchased from Messrs. Christian, of Liverpool, their interest in the lease of a mine of soap rock

PL. XIV. **WORCESTER.**
Ice-pail decorated with a Sèvres
pattern.

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DYSON PERRINS COLLECTION.



which had been already worked for about twenty years at Mullion, in Cornwall, for the same purpose. They paid for it the rather heavy sum of £500.

The Worcester glaze which had, naturally, to agree with the hardness of the paste, was modified by the addition of Oriental china ground into powder to the usual basis of glaze, lead, and alkalies. This glaze was not liable to craze like those of the Bow and China ware, and it cannot be so easily scratched with sharp steel. In doubtful cases, a piece of Worcester porcelain can be easily recognised by being submitted to that test.

A greenish translucency of the body, due to the presence of a small quantity of smalt added to the fritt to counteract its yellow tint, is another useful guide to identification.

After the adoption of bone ashes and Cornish clays, the Worcester body assumed the same character as that of other English factories, and can no longer be distinguished from similar compounds.

III.

When referring to the divers types of porcelain of European origin—for the sake of comparison or any other purpose—one may be excused for neglecting to mention many a factory of relative importance; but there are exceptional places, the name of which it would be unpardonable to omit: say, for instance, Sèvres, in

connection with French porcelain, and Meissen, when one turns to the production of the German makers. In both countries, as we scarcely need say, there are a multitude of manufactories which could each put forth a special claim to recognition; but a single one has been selected, by common assent, out of the whole group, as uniting the larger part of the individual merits of all the others, and embodying the true spirit of the national art.

If such a prominent position is to be occupied in England by a particular factory, Worcester should be, for many reasons, acknowledged as the most complete representative of the aggregate of British china. Bow and Chelsea have their unparalleled creamy and mellow paste, presented, in the last case, in untold varieties of fanciful creations; Bristol boasts the robustness of its constitutive substance and the masterly style of its figures; Nantgarw shows a whiteness and translucency of body that delight the collector. The Worcester porcelain possesses none, it is true, of these striking features in which a particular class of ware stands unrivalled; but we find in it a combination of sterling qualities, blended together in such exact proportions as to exclude any idea of exaggeration or shortness in any of the factors. A choice specimen of Worcester embodies the collectivity of the characters of English manufacture, crystallised, as it were, into the unit. This is, of course, the expression of a personal opinion; it may be a point of faith, but not a matter of fact. If I venture to present

it, in all sincerity, I do not expect that it shall pass unchallenged.

Unlike the other ancient factories which have heedlessly neglected to garner in or procure instructive testimonials of their past achievements, the Worcester Porcelain Works possess a Museum, in which obsolete models, old moulds, original copper plates, deeds, and autographs connected with the various phases of the manufacture are exhibited for the benefit of the student. An annotated and illustrated catalogue, prepared by the late R. W. Binns, by whose untiring care the Museum was formed, still enhances the value of a most comprehensive collection.

Some of the early models were taken from silver-plate. We have seen that jewellers and silversmiths were connected with the foundation of the first porcelain manufactories, in which they acted as art directors; moreover, the retail trade of ornamental china was in the hands of the fashionable silversmiths, who used to enrich the choicest specimens with silver and ormolu mounts of their own making; an association between the designs of silver-plate and porcelain existed thereby as a matter of course. The modeller played a very small part in the production of the Worcester porcelain; by far the larger number of shapes were copied from plain Chinese pieces; groups and figures are so rare that it was questioned at one time whether they were ever made at the factory;

fancy forms, in the taste of the period, were only exceptionally executed.

The most ancient moulds preserved in the Museum are worth our attention. They were carved, or rather sunk, out of a lump of dry clay or other soft material, in the way followed by the die-sinker, and not obtained, as customary, by impression upon a block. As this method of mould-cutting was peculiar to the salt-glaze potters of Staffordshire, we may fairly conjecture that the first batch of operatives had been drawn from the Potteries.

To produce a deluding substitute for the expensive porcelain that came from the East was, as we have already seen, the constant pre-occupation of the makers. In the totality of the early productions: cups without handles, globular tea-pots, plain jars, hexagonal beakers, and other pieces, Chinese shapes predominate largely over all other articles. For long all motives of decoration were, likewise, borrowed from Chinese models.

Some of the original specimens and the copies that were made from them are shown side by side in the instructive collection that Mr. Robert Drane, of Cardiff, has formed to illustrate the origin and transformations of the various styles followed at Worcester. The same collection contains also a series of odd cups and saucers of Oriental porcelain curiously matched with saucers and cups of English make. In most cases the imitation is so successful as to deceive a connoisseur at first glance.

The Tonkin ware of the commencement was, as its name implies, Chinese in form and decoration. All shapes were thrown and turned, with plain spouts, handles, etc.; they were painted in blue under glaze, with very simple designs. As they were chiefly to be retailed as Oriental, they were seldom marked, unless they bore the Chinese-looking sign adopted by the painter. The earliest mark known, the cursive W, is sometimes seen upon such pieces, but it appears more frequently upon the articles pressed in a mould, the embossed ornamentation of which would have, in any case, disclosed an English origin. Later on, in view of assisting the profitable confusion that arose between Worcester and Chinese porcelain, a deceptive mark in the form of a fretted square was affixed to the richest pieces. A delicate and yet effective mode of decoration, which consisted in carving by hand a pattern in the dry clay, was also borrowed from the Chinese. Some examples of it are in existence in which the vitreous translucency of the sunk parts, opposed to the greater opacity of the design left in relief, produces a very pleasant effect.

This undeviating affectation of producing none but Oriental patterns has often been ascribed to a regrettable lack of originality. Such a reproach is not altogether justified. Although bound to gratify the fashionable taste of the moment—all had then to be Chinese, as it has now to be *art nouveau*—Worcester has done more

than to execute correct but spiritless copies. Notwithstanding the undeniable fact that all the decorative notions were derived from Eastern art, the particular disposition of the borrowed details, the distinctive style of the painters, and above all the intrinsic quality of the substance have resulted in a general effect decidedly English in character. At any rate, no Worcester piece could, after the slightest examination, possibly be mistaken for a Chinese production; this holds good even in the cases of actual reproduction.

From the intimate familiarity of the makers with the best examples of Oriental manufacture, the ware has benefited in more ways than one. For instance, the standard of excellence is uniformly maintained; a Worcester piece, however simple and inexpensive, is always well made and of refined appearance; so much could scarcely be said of the porcelain turned out, at contemporary times, by the other factories. Moreover, the average of the typical works presents a sobriety of decorative treatment which stands in striking contrast with the display of extravagant ornamentation so freely indulged in at other places for the embellishment of the most ambitious and costly articles. This exuberance of lawless fantasy is often repelling to the squeamish taste of the foreign amateur.

But the most fastidious critic would have no fault to find with the Worcester ware of the square-mark period. The powdered and salmon scale blue grounds,

so frequently resorted to, set out, in a soft but powerful manner, the delicate tint of the creamy-white paste. The reserved panels contain birds and flowers sufficiently fanciful and conventional to have been called "exotic," for want of a better name. They are painted in colours which are bright and gay, without any suggestion of crudity. Lastly, the gilding is of a deep and rich tone, but exempt from objectionable glitter. A specimen of this order is bound to be universally admired.

To pass suddenly from imitating, almost exclusively, the Chinese models, to decorating the ware by means of printed proofs taken from a copper plate—transferred upon the surface, and fixed to it by firing—as was done at Worcester in 1756, shows clearly that they were not averse to introduce any startling novelty which offered a chance of success.

The process of transfer printing was brought over by Robert Hancock, an engraver, who had previously practised it at the enamel works of Battersea. All the various styles of transfer used at that time are fully illustrated in the Battersea enamels of the Schreiber collection. There can be no possibility, therefore, of the method having originated at Worcester, although, at one moment, R. Holdship, one of the partners, attempted to claim the invention as his own. He went so far as causing his crest, an anchor, to be added to some of the engraved plates, although these could not have been the work of his hand; there is no record that to his avocation

of a glover he joined the talent of an artist. All he may have done was to superintend at the works the transfer of the prints upon the ware.

R. Hancock had brought with him a few of the coppers he had engraved at Battersea. With these the first trials were made, and in consequence the same subjects appear upon enamel and porcelain.

The innovation was most favourably received. Not only was it a curious and attractive mode of decoration, but it also allowed excellent portraits of the heroes of the day, in indelible print, to be obtained at a comparatively cheap cost. Jugs and mugs adorned with likenesses of Frederick the Great and the Marquis of Granby had a very large sale. Small subjects of pastoral figures, hunting scenes, landscapes, ruins, coats-of-arms, etc., were engraved by Hancock, Valentine Green, John Ross, and others, for the ornamentation of tea ware and small articles. The portraits of King George III. and Queen Charlotte are a little later in date. The subjects are usually printed in "jet-black," and occasionally in gold-purple or iron-red. Sometimes the print is painted over with transparent colours in a manner that can scarcely be said to improve it.

One has good cause to believe that under-glaze printing—a process which was, later on, to supersede almost all other methods for the decoration of English earthenware—was first practised at Worcester. In 1770, the blue and white painters are said to have entered a

PL. XX. WORCESTER.

Hexagonal Vase, with views of ru-
transfer printing, coloured wi-
transparent enamels

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DYSON PERRINS & CO. LTD.



protest against the adoption of this process, which threatened to deprive them of their regular work. They all went on strike, and several of them left the factory to seek employment elsewhere. No example of blue printing under-glaze has ever been found that may be considered anterior to that date.

So deep-rooted was the habit of following the Chinese style in all its forms that after printing had been firmly established, Worcester was still producing, upon egg-shell china, imitations of the so-called Indian ink Chinese paintings, themselves clumsy reproductions of the European engravings supplied to the native artists by the missionaries and the agents of the East India Company. It is still more curious to see them follow the method introduced by the Dutch, who, wanting to relieve the monotony of the Oriental white and blue porcelain, enlivened it with the application of surface red and green enamels. A servile imitation of that inexcusable process is noticed on many white and blue Worcester pieces.

Much of the Worcester porcelain was printed in London by private decorators who were, inconsiderately enough, granted the facility of buying white ware at the works. The *Public Advertiser* for January, 1768, contains an advertisement inserted by a China dealer, named J. Giles, who styles himself "China and Enamel Painter, and Proprietor of the Worcester Porcelain Warehouse"—a description, by the bye, that he was made to drop in his next advertisement. He had a kiln in Kentish Town.

Craft tells us, in his memorandum, that it was to Giles' kiln that he took his Bow porcelain bowl to be fired. The establishment was open to all; many outsiders, professional or amateurs, brought there to be baked some very odd performances. In this way can we account for the number of puzzling specimens we meet with in the collections, which are of true Worcester body, but bear a style of decoration that cannot be attributed to any known factory. The kiln of Kentish Town and the stock-in-trade at the warehouse, were purchased by Duesbury after the failure of J. Giles.

The porcelain painter was, by nature or necessity, of rather wandering habits. We can follow the migration of a few of them, passing from one factory into another; but their coming into a new place never seems to have exerted any influence on the general character of the productions. None of these painters had a talent sufficiently personal to make its mark. Soon after they had joined the workshop their individual manner, if they had any, was merged into the routine practice followed by their mates.

The importance of the engagement, in 1768, of some of the best hands who left the Chelsea works at that time, and the impulse they are said to have given to the artistic improvement of the Worcester porcelain, should not be exaggerated. As a matter of course, the available number of experienced painters being thus largely increased, it allowed the multiplication of richly-

painted pieces. But a characteristic style of decoration had been settled long before, and it was affected but little by these additions to the staff. New notions could not fail to make their appearance; but in every instance where the Chelsea taste has modified the regular Worcester style, the result is not always to be commended.

Groups of naturalistic flowers, cupids in the clouds, or pretty figures with a landscape ground, began to replace, in the reserved panels, the pseudo-Oriental fantasies which had so far been found sufficient to embellish a vase. Sèvres had given the example of making the copy of some graceful picture by Watteau or Boucher stand as the centre of a scheme of decoration; the skill of the copyist had imparted to the china painting something of the charm and delicacy of a miniature. Such consummate ability was not always at the service of the Chelsea and Worcester painters, who attempted to follow the French leaders. Their work does not always exhibit a remarkable finish, and it looks often more like the caricature than the copy of the fine original they meant to reproduce.

Be it as it may, a vase which joins to brightness of colour and abundance of minute details the attractiveness of an interesting figure subject, shall always possess the recommendations which stand above all others in the mind of the china-lover. Vases of this description are well represented in the Worcester porcelain made between 1768 and 1780. The value attached to them is shown

by the enormous price they reach when some of them appear in an auction sale.

A set of three vases, in the Rothschild collection, painted by Donaldson with "The Birth of Bacchus" and the figures of "Leda" and "Europa," has often been referred to as the masterpiece of the kind. A fine pair, on which are represented the "Rape of Helen" and "Æneas rescuing his father Anchises," in the Dyson-Perrins collection, is attributed to the same painter. In the same collection, vases with subjects of animals are signed and dated "O'Neale, 1769." The works of this last artist are also highly appreciated. To these names may be added those of C. Fogo, Dyer, Mills, and Willman, who worked in and after 1768.

It is from that period that dates the introduction of varied coloured grounds such as sky blue, sea green and French green, purple, scarlet, canary yellow, none of which had been tried before. We notice among the colours employed by the enamel painter an opaque blue of pure and intense tint, and with a nearly matt surface, which is quite peculiar to Worcester.

However prevalent was the imitation of Chinese patterns, the bulk of the production had always included a goodly sprinkling of models in the fashionable taste of the day. But, again, they do not claim our attention on the score of originality; their sole pretension is to imitate the ware which then commanded the largest share of success. From the Dresden porcelain they took

the shape of their pierced baskets, fruit dishes, and covered tureens; from the other English factories they borrowed the notion of some exceptional articles, namely, that of the sweetmeat stand made of an agglomeration of shells, corals, and rocks; such a favourite model that variations of it were produced in all the chief porcelain works. Figures and groups were not made in sufficient quantity ever to constitute one of the regular branches of manufacture. A letter from T. Falconer, addressed to C. Gray, Chester, 1766, says: "The great improvement made in the Worcester manufactory of China would have afforded you great pleasure, as it did me. It is hardly surpassed by the Vincennes, and much cheaper; they have not yet debased it by making vile attempts at human figures, but stick to the useful." This had long been considered sufficient to show that figures were never made at Worcester. That they were attempted at one moment is now placed beyond a doubt. Mrs. Philip Lybbe Powys, who wrote an account of her visit to Worcester in 1771, saw the figure-makers at work, and describes how they pressed the heads and limbs in separate moulds, and stuck them together to form the complete statuette.

They are so rare, however, that to advise china collectors to start in search of Worcester figures might be resented as an unnecessarily ironical recommendation. Only two genuine examples have, so far, been mentioned: they are odd female figures, with baskets, standing on a

rococo base, and marked with the crossed sword and the gold crescent. Both are now in the Dyson-Perrins collection. Others may be in existence. One may expect the good fortune of recognizing the true Worcester paste in one of the many unmarked figures of the period. It is always to that nondescript class that we have to turn, as our last hope, whenever we despair to find anywhere else a spared remnant of a ware that seems utterly lost to us.

The diary of Mrs. P. Lybbe Powys has been lately published by Longman and Co. It contains a description of the works in 1771. We hear that one hundred and sixty persons were employed, most of them very little boys. Also that no room was provided to exhibit their most beautiful china finished, and that it was sent to the shops in Worcester for sale.

On Thomas Flight assuming the direction of the Works in 1783, a marked change took place in the character of the Worcester porcelain, not only with regard to its artistic merit, but also in what concerned the processes of manufacture.

The harmonious combination of paste and colours we admire so justly in some of the exquisite pieces of the Dr. Wall period depended, more than is generally suspected, on the nature of the materials employed. Nothing more is necessary to show the sad result that can be effected by a change of materials than to contrast the effect of the very same pattern when it is, in one

WORCESTER.

No. 11. Reverse side of the Donaldson
Vase, with horses painted
by O'Neale.

✱

17. Dated 1800.





instance, painted upon an early specimen, and in the other, upon a piece of the Flight and Barr period. The experiment is easy to make, old designs having been frequently reproduced in later times.

All purely artistic considerations had to give way to the application of technical improvements. It is not a question of less skilful treatment; both examples are pencilled with equal care. But we observe that in the late production the tone of the salmon scale blue ground is extremely clear and bright, but that it jars harshly with the staring whiteness of the body; a chemically-refined oxide of cobalt had replaced the smalt, a trade mixture of glass and raw cobalt ore, in use at the commencement. The painting, in loud and crude colours, remains on the surface; an excessive hardening of the glaze prevented the colours from sinking into it. Finally, the gilding, applied in flat and broad patches, shines like burnished metal; a liquid amalgamation of gold and mercury was employed instead of the fine dust gold which could be either raised in rich embossments or powdered so lightly as to form a transparent cloud. All these alterations were an undeniable gain to the manufacturer; but through their application a distinguished and refined design has become showy and vulgar, and the man of taste will always regret that the primitive processes should have been abandoned.

This course of miscalculated improvements even affected, much for the worse, the original method of

transfer printing. In place of the spirited etchings and line engravings which had for long so fitly contributed to the embellishment of the Worcester porcelain, the process of bat printing permitted proofs of atrocious stippled engravings from which no artistic or decorative effect could ever be expected to be applied to the same purpose.

On the deplorable state of the ornamental productions at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is needless to insist. All the industrial arts were, so to speak, under a cloud at that moment. Porcelain was bound to obey the tendency of the public taste in its uncontrollable debasement and to suffer from the consequences of the prevailing indifference to all things of beauty. One must, therefore, pity and forgive, rather than disparage and condemn, the unavoidable outcome of such unpropitious circumstances. But it cannot be denied that the so-called classical shapes adopted at that time, devoid as they are of elegance as well as of adaptability to the purpose they were intended to serve, appear somewhat objectionable. As to the paintings of flowers, landscapes, and figures, with which they are completed, and which are neither conventional nor naturalistic, but simply childish in their ordinary treatment, their mediocrity acts as an eyesore on the same enlightened collector who would revel in the contemplation of a select piece of the earlier period.

The richest display of ornamentation was reserved

for the table services made for the royal family and the nobility. Odd specimens of such services are seen in many collections. Over the central part of a ponderous plate, edged with huge gadroons, a disproportionately large coat-of-arms is ostentatiously spread. The dark blue border is covered with a heavy gilding work of commonplace scrolls and arabesques. There was a time when the admiration excited by similar specimens could never have been too warmly expressed; it would now require some courage to praise them unreservedly.

A veil had better be thrown over the subsequent productions of a concern in full decline. With the revival of applied arts which followed the impulse given by the first international exhibitions, the vitality of the Worcester works was to assert itself in a most striking manner. But as the present account intends to deal only with "old china," it shall not, therefore, enter upon a subject sufficiently familiar to our contemporaries to require further comments.

IV.

The Worcester porcelain is exceptionally rich in marks. From the very first each painter was wont to affix to his work a distinctive sign. These signs affect generally the appearance of Chinese characters; it is not rare, however, to discover in these apparently meaningless scrollings a disguised W, or the initial letter of the

artist's name. A great number of these private marks are reproduced in the special works. The complete list may perhaps never be gathered. A still unrecorded monogram or a curious sign is occasionally found inscribed under a specimen of undoubted origin; each of these has, of course, to be added to the already very lengthy roll of Worcester artists' marks, and seems to promise that others have still to come.

A monogram formed of T and F, so far supposed to stand for Thomas Fry, of Bow, must be restituted to Worcester. In the Dyson-Perrins collection is a replica of the 1751 tureen, the earliest dated example. The origin of this tureen is authenticated by the very mould in which it was formed being still in the factory. The replica, painted in under-glaze blue, bears that monogram; it appears also on several other pieces of the same collection. A plate, painted in blue in Chinese style, shows it in combination with two other signs.

We also give an unpublished mark, not yet identified, which occurs on a handleless cup with a Japanese pattern in the Drane collection.

Numerous also are the marks adopted, at successive periods, to distinguish the productions of the manufactory. The two earliest in date were the cursive W, which stood for Worcester, and not for John Ward, as it has been sometimes stated; and the crescent, said to have been borrowed from the bearings of the Warmstry arms. Both are seen painted in blue under the glaze; examples

WORCESTER.

No. 54. Vase decorated in transfer
printing.



DESSON PERPINS COLLECTION



of the crescent in red or gold are also found, and the same mark appears frequently upon the printed ware; it was used until 1793.

Spurious marks, the crossed swords of Dresden and a Chinese fretted square, were employed at the same period. The deceitful intent that this unscrupulous marking of the ware with a foreign sign seems to indicate was not carried very far. It is not rare to meet with a piece on which the crossed swords are accompanied with a decoration in the Chinese style, while another specimen unites the fretted square with paintings of Dresden flowers.

Lastly come the great variety of the marks modified with each change supervening in the management of the works, and which bear, in most cases, the full name of the manufacturers. The works of R. W. Binns, which contain all the information so far obtained on Worcester and its porcelain, as well as the articles in Chaffers' and Jewitt's general histories, give the complete series of the marks.



MARKS.

CAUGHLEY.

I.

THE well-known marks it bears are about the only peculiarities through which Caughley ware differs from the Worcester porcelain of an average quality. Indeed, one may fairly assume that such a china would never have been made at Caughley had not all the ways and means of manufacture been obtained from Worcester. In carrying it out on his own behalf, the fresh exponent of a long-established practice never lost sight of the notions he had derived from a unique source. For that reason the Shropshire china stands somewhat deprived of the interest attached to any production which presents, at least, a semblance of individuality.

Compared with the account of the rise of the other English factories, and the puzzling uncertainty of their early conditions, the history of the Caughley works is commonplace in the extreme.

Thomas Turner, who had been apprenticed as an engraver to the Worcester works, where he appears to have mastered all the secrets of the trade, arrived at Caughley in 1772. He was then twenty-three years of

age. Openly, he came to succeed Mr. Gallimore in the management of an earthenware factory previously carried on without much success. His chief purpose, however, was to turn to good profit a newly-acquired knowledge, and start the manufacture of porcelain on the same lines as the Worcester Company. The locality of Caughley presented great advantages: coals and marl, two indispensable requisites both deficient in Worcestershire, were abundant in the place, while the proximity of the Severn afforded great facilities for the transport of the goods. The building of a large china factory, quite independent from the old earthenware works, was commenced at once, but it was only completed in 1775. At the end of that year Turner had made sufficient progress to be able to advertise in the press the sale of his new porcelain.

Thomas Turner, born in 1749, was the son of Dr. Richard Turner, rector of Cumbarton, in Worcestershire. Being a man of position, and of independent means, he was consequently able to manage his factory and conduct his business free from the hindering interference of exacting shareholders. He had married Dorothy Gallimore, niece of Mr. Brown, of Caughley Hall, proprietor of the earthenware works. Early in life he was made a freeman of the City of Worcester and of two other boroughs, and a justice of the peace for Shropshire. Such were the fortunate circumstances which assisted his well-directed efforts and secured his success.

A visit to the porcelain manufactories of France, undertaken towards 1780, was productive of many practical suggestions for the improvement of his manufacture. The few artists and workmen he engaged in that country greatly facilitated the introduction of these improvements. Several clever men were trained at his works; a few of them, such as John Rose, Thomas Minton, Martin Randall, and others, were subsequently to start on their own account.

Turner never attempted to compete with the artistic productions of the leading factories. His ware was of excellent quality, but limited to useful articles. The turn-out was regular, and important at one time. Besides manufacturing the stock he required for his own use, he was able to supply R. Chamberlain with the white porcelain that the latter decorated and sold as his own when he left the Worcester works. It is said that the first ware decorated by Grainger was obtained from the same source.

Turner having retired from business in 1799, the works were bought by J. Rose, who made a partial use of them in connection with his Coalport factory, until they were closed and the building pulled down in 1814.

II.

When Turner left Worcester in 1772, blue printing under-glaze had just been introduced. He understood

what advantages could be expected from a widened application of a process unequalled for cheapness and rapidity, and he adopted it, almost exclusively, for the decoration of the ware. Owing to most appropriate treatment of the engraving, the decorative effect was excellent; in many instances, it requires a well experienced eye to distinguish a printed subject from a painted one. Caughley printing is usually characterised by the brightness of the blue and an intensity of the tint, sometimes exaggerated.

Turner's connection with the works, where he had gained his technical proficiency, was never interrupted. His old master, Robert Hancock, supplied Caughley with plates engraved by his own hand. Himself an engraver of talent, Turner executed many subjects not unlike those produced at Worcester. Chaffers reports, on the authority of an old workman, that in 1797 four printing presses which had been introduced by Davis were at work at Caughley. This refers, no doubt, to Davis junior, who was a partner in the old Worcester Company.

The style of work of young Thomas Minton, an engraver apprentice under Turner, suited particularly well the reproduction of the designs of Nankin porcelain. What pattern has ever had a run of success comparable to that of the evergreen "willow pattern" he engraved for Caughley from an original Chinese plate? Other subjects of the same description were brought out; at first, restricted to china, but subsequently applied, on a

much more extensive scale, to the decoration of earthenware. The first blue printed service was made by Turner in 1780 for Thomas Whitemore, Esq., of Apley Park, near Bridgenorth.

There is a second period in which the Caughley porcelain was embellished with rich gilding, paintings of flowers, birds and landscapes, and enamelled ornamentation; as a rule, it shows but little pretension to artistic refinement. Two of the landscape painters, Muss and Silk, left to work independently in London, where they gained some repute as painters on enamel.

III.

The strict commercial honesty prevailing under our system of registered trade marks had no cause to exist at a time when any mark well known on the market could be pirated with impunity. A good imitation of a Worcester type would scarcely have answered the purpose of the maker had it not been completed with the distinctive crescent. At Caughley we find it boldly affixed to the earliest pieces, and later on slightly altered into a capital C, the shape of which still leaves room for ambiguous interpretation. To correspond to the curious private marks of the white and blue Worcester painters, we have a set of disguised numbers, intricately scrolled over, offering the same pseudo-Chinese character. The Dresden crossed swords, imitated in so many other places,

could not have been omitted there; they are found on basket-ware of German design. There are some exceptions, however, of genuine marks among so many counterfeits. The letter S, or the full word SALOPIAN, which might have been used a little oftener, appear on specimens of the finest description.



MARKS.

COALPORT.

COALPORT must be considered as the immediate continuation and extension of the Caughley factory.

It would be well-nigh impossible to draw the imaginary line that should separate the respective productions of both places at the time when work stopped at Caughley and began in earnest at Coalport, so perfectly similar are they in every point.

John Rose, the founder, was born in 1772. Having served his apprenticeship with T. Turner, he began business by taking the management of the Jackfield pottery, in partnership with a Mr. Blackeway. This was only a preparatory move to carrying into effect his intention of manufacturing porcelain in competition with his former employer. At the end of a few years he left Jackfield and set up a factory at Coalport, a small village in the Coalbrook Dale, opposite the Caughley works, on the other side of the Severn. Of the ware he made at that period one could scarcely point out an incontestable specimen. One has good cause to believe that he fought the opponent with his own weapons, produced the same models, and used the same marks. Turner felt himself

COALPORT.

No. 57 Jug, with monogram.

See also Collection.



no match for a man of such business ability; so, rather than continue a hopeless struggle, he retired from the contest in 1799, after having sold the Caughley works to a company formed by J. Rose. The concern was amalgamated with that of Coalport, but the premises were only used for making biscuit ware. The goods were transported in that state to be glazed and decorated by the superior staff of men at work on the opposite bank of the river.

An enterprising spirit, gifted with an acute sense of profitable opportunities, J. Rose was to benefit, as Duesbury had done before him, by the collapse of several china factories, and to absorb them all, with great advantage, into the establishment placed under his management. His dawning success had been grounded upon the purchase of the decaying Caughley works; his industrial prosperity was assured by the annexation of what was left of the extinct factories of Nantgarw and Swansea. The transaction was effected in 1820, J. Rose's partners being, at the time, W. Clarke and Ch. Maddison. The plant, moulds, and models of both places were transferred to the Coalbrook Dale works, and a selection was made from among the most skilful artists and experienced workmen of the discarded staff. Billingsley and his son-in-law, Walker—of whose ceaseless wanderings we have already heard—were engaged for a number of years. They undertook to produce the famous white and translucid porcelain made at Swansea and Nantgarw, of

which they possessed the secret. This particular body, said by some connoisseurs to be the finest ever produced, was so difficult to control, and the result was so unreliable, that it had previously ruined all those who had attempted its manufacture. John Rose was of too practical a turn of mind to do more than experiment upon the Billingsley body. He used it only for the making of a few exceptional pieces, to be decorated with special care, and intended to enhance the good name of the firm. In this manner the Coalport porcelain was raised to a degree of perfection and costliness undreamed of before. Creditable as they were for material and workmanship, those pieces were, however, no better, as works of art, than pretentious imitations of the leading types of the best English and foreign factories; as commercial articles they may be described as unmitigated forgeries. They were invariably marked with the gold anchor of Chelsea, the two L.'s of Sèvres, or any other sign calculated to increase their value in the eye of an unwary purchaser.

Walker had introduced a maroon colour, now highly appreciated by collectors; to this was added the Mazarine blue; a bright pink which approached the tint of the Rose Du Barry of Sèvres was discovered later on; but in spite of long and costly experiments, the French turquoise could never be obtained, and a light blue was used in its stead.

As an industrial enterprise, the Coalbrook Dale

Company had gone far ahead from their starting point. In 1820, a fine and reliable porcelain body had been settled, in the composition of which bone ashes, China clay and felspar entered for a large part. Warehouses were opened in London and several provincial towns; the goods had taken a firm footing on the market. John Rose died in 1841. It was reserved to his successors to raise the position of the firm to a still higher level. The exhibits they contributed to the first World's Fair placed the Coalport works on a par with the most important factories of England. An idea of the wide range of the superior productions may be formed from the illustrated catalogues of the industrial exhibitions in which they are reproduced.

II.

As a rule, a Coalport piece is not to be recognised through the mark it bears. At first, the crescent, the capital C, and the word SALOPIAN, were appropriated from Caughley; later on, all kinds of pirated marks were used as the case required. Collectors have noticed, however, that almost in every instance of a forged sign, it is accompanied by a very minute cross. When the manufacturers became alive to the necessity of securing recognition for their own ware, a private mark was at last adopted. It consists in the full name of Coalport, or C. Dale, or in a monogram formed with the letters C. D.

A curious combination of cursive S. and C., to which are added C. S. N. of smaller size, unites the initials of Salopian, Caughley, Swansea, and Nantgarw, which had all been absorbed in the Coalport factory. The words "Daniell, London," under a royal crown, are often taken as representing the Coalbrook Dale manufacture. It was a dealer's mark also affixed upon articles of other origin.

One might omit to mention, in connection with the Coalbrook Dale works, their modest and forgotten offshoot, the Madeley factory, were it not that it affords an occasion of speaking of the extensive trade in spurious Sèvres pieces that was thriving at that moment. In spite of their foreign garb, those pieces are English by their birthplace, and on that account must be briefly referred to.

Towards 1820, London dealers, being unable to answer the growing demand for old Sèvres porcelain, had hit upon the convenient plan of having tolerable reproductions of it made and painted to their order. Few, if any, of their confident customers ever suspected the trickery of which they had been the dupes. For the highest class of articles, real pieces of Sèvres were obtained in the white, or else poorly painted specimens were stripped of all traces of painting with fluoric acid, and after having been re-glazed, were covered with an elaborate and costly decoration. For a more current trade, the Swansea, Nantgarw, and Coalport factories supplied white ware copied from the Sèvres models. On

the instigation of notable China dealers, Martin Randall and his mate, Robins, both coming from Coalbrook Dale, set up a decorating shop in town, where nothing else was done but work of that description.

Business was, indeed, so prosperous that Martin Randall, who knew something of fritted porcelain manufacture, formed the project of dispensing with the assistance of the china maker, and establishing a manufactory of his own. It was at Madeley, a village on the borders of Shropshire, that he transferred his staff of painters and erected a small oven. His attempt was not rewarded with success; only a few pieces could be obtained in good condition out of each firing; most often the whole contents of the oven had to be thrown away as worthless.

Meantime the meretricious decorating trade continued to be flourishing. White ware was procured from the usual sources: agents in Paris were sending over to London a fair supply of undecorated Sèvres, and the Coalport factory provided the rest. Martin Randall prided himself on his conscience, which would not allow him to place the crossed L.L. on a work of his hand executed upon a piece of English make; but he had no objection to mark in that manner the numerous decorations he painted upon real Sèvres porcelain.

Needless to say that the Madeley factory never had a private mark. A few pieces of Randall's own manufacture may exist in the English collections among the

Sèvres imitations of uncertain provenance; but they are so rare that if one of them could be positively singled out, it might be shown as one of the rarities of English ceramics.

John Randall, a descendant of Martin, has collected a few interesting particulars concerning the Shropshire porcelain manufactories in his little volume, *The Clay Industries on the Banks of the Severn*, Madeley, 1877.

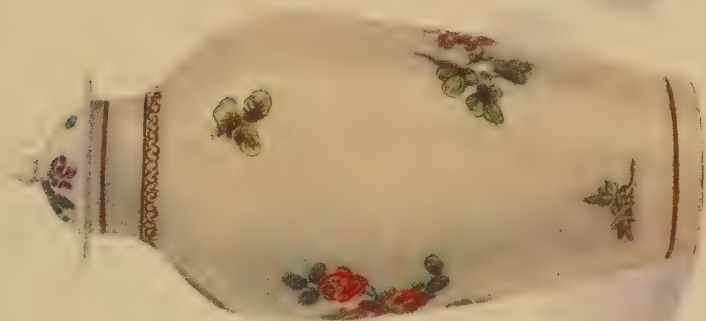
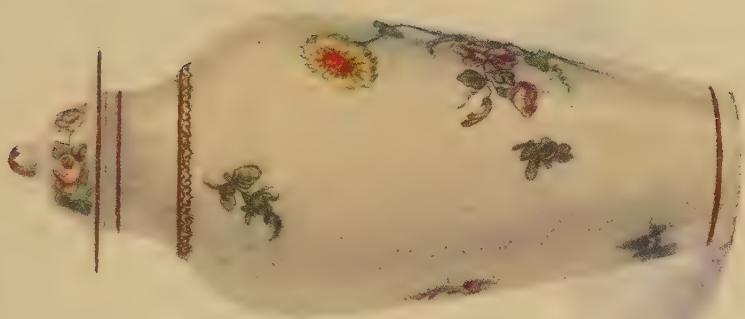


MARKS.

Three vases marked with the
of tin.

3

SCHMIDTKE COLLECTION.



PLYMOUTH.

THE discovery of native elements, corresponding exactly to those used by the Oriental porcelain-makers, has brought about a radical transformation in the whole range of pottery manufacture in England; the opening of the small factory at Plymouth, where the china clay and stone were for the first time turned to good account by their discoverer, William Cookworthy, is a memorable fact in the history of English ceramics.

Not that to succeed in making real porcelain was, at that time, a surprising achievement. Hard porcelain was being regularly manufactured all over the Continent. Nor was it of much importance in the interest of the English ceramic industry; the short existence of the two factories in which the fabrication had been given a fair trial, and the final abandonment of the process, demonstrate that if not altogether impracticable, it was, at any rate, decidedly unprofitable.

Far beyond this application to an uncalled-for imitation of the Chinese porcelain were the services that the Cornish clays were to render to the potter's trade in all its branches. In his proudest expectation, the finder

had dreamed of nothing higher than to produce a fair equivalent of a ware made only in foreign parts; with the new materials thus placed at his disposal, the British manufacturer was to create new bodies which had no equal among the productions of other countries.

Our English china, which stands alone on its merits as having none of the technical difficulties of the old fritted paste, and yet permitting the display of bright and harmonious colours unobtainable upon the hard porcelain, as well as our admirable earthenware, which vies with china in whiteness of body and limpidity of glaze, and can be sold at a price not exceeding that of the rough pottery of yore, owe both these sterling qualities to the well-balanced combinations in newly-devised compounds of the native kaolin and felspar introduced by W. Cookworthy.

A few letters and papers in the possession of the family throw a scanty light on the experiments that Cookworthy prosecuted, after his discovery of china clay, for more than twenty years before he was satisfied that all obstacles had been overcome, and that he could apply for a patent and begin the manufacture of hard porcelain.

It is not out of place to remark, at this stage of the narrative, that most of the fruitful inventions which have materially altered the conditions of the fictile arts at certain periods are due to the intervention of outsiders, that is to say, of men who had not been brought up to

the potter's trade. For instance, Luca Della Robbia, so justly credited for the introduction of enamelled terra cotta into Italy, was a sculptor. Bernard Palissy, who did so much in France to raise the making of glazed pottery to the dignity of an art, was a land surveyor. Böttger, to whom Germany is indebted for the discovery of the secrets of Oriental porcelain, was an apothecary's apprentice. Lastly, Cookworthy, whose name will live long in the memory of all English potters, was a chemist and druggist.

William Cookworthy, a poor widow's son, born in 1705, had been apprenticed to a London chemist named Bevens. So great was the confidence placed by the master on the intelligence and integrity of his young assistant that he entrusted to him the establishment, at Plymouth, of a branch of the business, which was carried on under the firm Bevens and Cookworthy.

In his new situation, Cookworthy was brought into constant intercourse with people who had raw materials or chemical preparations to sell. It was in this way that, in 1745, he met with a traveller who was bringing from America a peculiar sort of white clay he called the china earth, accompanied with some beautiful specimens of the ware said to have been made out of it. This meeting does not appear to have been followed by any profitable sequence. But the seed was sown which was to fructify in the mind of Cookworthy, and become a well-planned scheme of making hard porcelain with materials

found on English soil. On his business journeys through Cornwall he had had occasion to notice the deep lodes of a fine white clay, which seemed to promise an inexhaustible supply, if ever some use could be found for it. He had often conned over the letters of Père d'Entrecolles, published in Du Halde's *History of China*, and in which the processes followed by the Chinese for the making of porcelain were accurately described. He was well acquainted with the particular nature of the infusible kaolin and of the vitrifiable petuntse, represented, respectively, as the bones and the flesh of the porcelain body. The moot point of his researches would not be, as he could well understand, to find out the infusible China clay, which he had at once recognised, but to discover the necessary complement through which the mass would acquire cohesion and translucency in the firing.

Many an ingenious potter had experimented previously with the same purpose in view, upon similar kinds of refractory white clays, but none, except Böttger, had succeeded in solving the problem. For many years the full completion of Cookworthy's discovery was thwarted by the lack of this indispensable complement that he was in vain trying to secure. A fair account of his troubles in that respect is contained in a most interesting autograph note, printed in full in Harrison's *Memoir of W. Cookworthy*. It bears no date, but we gather from it that, after preparatory experiments were at an end, and success all but achieved, there was still no question of

undertaking a regular manufacture. Speaking of his strenuous researches, the writer tells us that he had been working at them "for near to twenty years." Then he adds: "I was willing that the discovery might be preserved to posterity if I should not live to carry it into manufacture," and he goes on explaining the methods he had followed in his trials.

First he made use of a vitrifiable stone he found on the Tregonnin Hill, in the parish of Germo; but it had to be rejected as unsuitable on account of the quantity of lime it contained. Next he tried what he calls the moorstone granite, with no better result; the stone was highly fusible when melted in a crucible, but there was some black particles in it which, in the firing, increased in size, turned red, and left unseemly stains in the white body. At last he discovered, at St. Stephen, near St. Austell, a material which answered all the requirements.

Borlase, who wrote in 1758, says: "Mr. Cookworthy, of Plymouth, has made experiments on the Breage china stone, and it has been found useful in the making of porcelain." This refers evidently to researches still in the incipient state, for ten years were to elapse before the patent was applied for.

Mr. R. N. Worth asserts, in the notes on the Plymouth factory he contributed to the *Transactions of the Devon Association*, 1876, that Cookworthy had established a factory at Bristol as early as January, 1764, but had given

it up by February, 1766. It is quite possible that he conducted occasional experiments at that time, probably in one of the pottery works of the town available for such a purpose ; but this is scarcely sufficient to substantiate a statement which, if readily accepted, would deprive Plymouth of the honour of having been the cradle of English hard porcelain.

One of the places where the finest quality of china clay and stone had been found was the Bocconoc estate, in the parish of St. Stephen, the family seat of Thomas Pitt, who was to be created Lord Camelford in 1784. Having entered into communication with Cookworthy, Thomas Pitt followed with great interest the course of his trials and discoveries, and finally decided to supply the necessary funds for starting manufacture in good earnest. A patent was taken in 1768, which secured to the partners the sole rights of using the materials described in the specification. A factory was equipped at a part of Plymouth called Coxide, and operations were begun at once. Great activity was displayed by the directors, but the ware could not be made attractive enough to command a ready sale, and the enterprise never reached a great development. At the best of times it only gave employment to seventy or eighty hands, all told.

To make hard porcelain was quite a new departure in England. The mixture of the raw materials, the fashioning of the ware, the conduct of the firing, all

BOW ?).

No. 56.—Tea-pot, with dark-blue
ground.

R. DRANE COLLECTION.

•

PLYMOUTH.

No. 57.—Tea-pot, from the Prideaux
Collection, marked with the
sign of tin.

SCHREIBER COLLECTION.



differed materially from the usual routine of the potter's trade. No workmen could be found who understood such unwonted processes: each had to try and gain experience before he could be of much service. It must also be recollected that Cookworthy was not himself a potter, and consequently could not impart technical instruction to his men. One cannot be surprised if specimens manufactured under such adverse conditions should look more or less like trial pieces. As a rule, an average collection of the Plymouth china illustrates all the defects that may disfigure porcelain. The glaze is opaque or crazed in places; the body is often stained, blistered, or cracked from the effects of the fire. It is current among collectors that a fire crack at the inferior part of a piece is a sure sign of Plymouth origin. Champion, when applying to Parliament for an extension of the patent, described the porcelain of Cookworthy as "very imperfect," and contrasted it with his own, which he called "an almost perfect manufacture."

Cookworthy seems to have followed, as closely as possible, the Chinese methods reported by Père d'Entrecolles. The body was entirely composed of kaolin and felspar; the glaze was felspar, either pure or with a slight addition of vitrescent materials. The glazing was done when the ware was still in the porous state; the fuel for firing was wood; and the ovens were the same as those used for stoneware—the only ones in which the required intensity of heat could be produced.

A French painter named Saqui or Sequoi had been entrusted with the artistic direction. We know little about his talent, but he must have been a capable and energetic man. During the short existence of the works, and with very little cash at his disposal, he managed to bring out a comparatively large variety of articles.

It is true that most of the Plymouth models were borrowed from other manufactories. Of these, Bow seems to have supplied the larger part. Thus the bust of George II. and the figures of Woodward and Kitty Clive originally made at Bow are sometimes found bearing the Plymouth mark. Table ware was, as it was customary everywhere, copied from Chinese porcelain or contemporary silver-plate, and the shapes were always unpretentious. Small figures, white or painted in enamels, are said to be original works; some of them are backed with a bower of flowers, in imitation of the Chelsea models; but they are usually uninteresting and of inferior execution; two examples of the kind, a gardener and his wife, are in the Schreiber collection. The well-known salt-cellars and sweetmeat stands formed of shells supported by a confused agglomeration of rocks, corals, sea-weeds, and smaller shells previously made at Bow, Chelsea, and Worcester, were by a long way the most favourite productions. They are, indeed, considered as the best representative type of Plymouth manufacture.

The vicissitudes of the Plymouth factory have never been narrated in detail. All we know is that after three

years of untiring efforts over three thousand pounds had been spent, and there had been no returns. No hopes could any longer be entertained of ever making it a paying concern, and it was closed in 1771. Cookworthy was not, however, abandoning the manufacture of hard china, for he transported it to Bristol, where, in the hands of Richard Champion, it was to reach its highest degree of improvement.

The mark adopted was the alchemist's sign for tin: it was allegorical of Cornwall, the tin county. Painted in blue under the glaze or in reddish colour, it is seen on many specimens of Plymouth porcelain. In some instances the character of the paste and glaze must be considered in connection with the sign, for it may also indicate a Bristol origin. The same mark was for a time used by Champion. Some of the best Bristol pieces have it usually traced in gold, and in a few cases accompanied with a small cross. The full name of Cookworthy has been found inscribed upon a few exceptional specimens.



MARK.

BRISTOL.

I.

WHEN W. Cookworthy, undeterred by the failure of the Plymouth works, came to Bristol, in 1770, to establish the important factory that makes the subject of the present chapter, the manufacture of some sort of porcelain had been several times, but ineffectually, attempted in the town.

From the evidence supplied by some marked specimens, the authenticity of which could not be contested, we gather that artificial china was produced at Bristol almost as early as in any other place in England.

The mark BRISTOLL, in raised letters, appears upon a small fluted cream jug of soft paste, decorated with sprigs of flowers. Three butter boats, also of soft paste, and decorated in under-glaze blue, are impressed with the word BRISTOL. Lastly, a pair of clumsy white Chinese figures, of a unique kind, bear the mark and date, BRISTOLL, 1750, stamped in relief. The exceptionally dry and unvitriifiable nature of the body—evidently an experiment—would scarcely allow the term “soft paste” to be applied to these abnormal figures; it

PL. XVII. **BRISTOL.**
Group of Venus and Adonis.

SCHREIBER COLLECTION.



does not follow, however, that they are real hard porcelain. These curious examples are all in the Trapnell collection.

John Brittan, of whose work two signed specimens have remained in the possession of his descendants, may have been connected with the undetermined factory in which the pieces just described have been produced; he was an experienced potter who, later on, became foreman of the Champion factory. Both pieces are of coarse porcelain, painted in blue in the Chinese style. One is a plate with a conventional landscape inscribed "J.B. 1753"; the other a bowl, which bears the Blacksmith arms, the initials F.B., and the date 1762. The latter initials are those of Francis Brittan, an ironmonger, brother of John.

Another potter's name, which has been incidentally preserved to us, is that of Lowris, remembered as having been one of the principals in the establishment of a porcelain (?) factory at Limehouse. Of this enterprise we have no other record but that it failed. Lowris then came to Bristol, where he started to manufacture on his own account. His name may, perhaps, be associated with the nameless porcelain works mentioned by Champion in a letter dated 1756, in which it is said that he made some trials with a white china clay sent to him from America, in a place which has existed in the town for a few years, but "had just been closed."

Towards 1768 a company for the manufacture of

porcelain was constituted by Richard Champion. A working capital of about £5,000 had been subscribed by Joseph Hardford, E. Brice, J. Fry, and Th. Frank. To use the Cornish clay and stone would have been a direct infringement of the patent still in the hands of Cookworthy. Hugh Owen, the conscientious historian of the ceramic art in Bristol, has tried to meet such a remark by suggesting that Champion may have actually used these materials at that period under a license of the patentee. It is, however, a mere conjecture on his part; nothing has ever come out that would substantiate it. It may just be as possible—nay, probable—that Champion began to make the same artificial china that his unlucky predecessors had made before him, using either a frit, or the steatite already employed at Worcester, or any other substance. A work of that period is in the Schreiber collection. It is a bell-shaped mug, sparingly decorated in blue, and inscribed: "Josiah and Catharine Greethead, March 13, 1769." Be it as it may, the undertaking was again a very short-lived one; it yielded no promise of ever giving a pecuniary result, and the partnership was dissolved in 1769.

Champion, who had been on friendly terms with Cookworthy ever since 1764, seems to have occasionally joined him in his researches. The opening of a manufactory of hard porcelain, on the Castle Green, at Bristol, under the name of Cookworthy and Co., in 1770, was due to the joint exertion of these two men, who had been

unable to succeed in their separate venture. It is clear that the use of the available plant remaining from the two extinct factories was to facilitate the prompt establishment of a new one. This was obviously to be started on quite new principles; it is from that moment that dates the practicable introduction of hard porcelain manufacture at Bristol.

The necessary capital was easily procured, for Richard Champion was known to be a man of considerable energy and business capabilities. The thriving commercial enterprises, and the important improvements just carried out in the city with which his name was closely associated, had gained for him the confidence of his fellow-townsmen.

Although the firm was styled Cookworthy and Co., Champion's name only appears in every transaction. In the year 1771 he was giving to the builder the plan—reproduced in Owen's work, p. 18—not of an enamelling kiln, as it is erroneously designated in the book, but of a regular hard porcelain oven after the French method. At the same time he was advertising for china painters in the *Worcester Journal*. Soon afterwards an efficient staff of workmen had been brought together, and work was pushed on with unswerving activity.

A large consignment of Bristol china, consisting of "Beautiful dessert services, ornamental figures, candlesticks, etc.," was announced in *Felix Farley's Journal*, March, 1771, to be on sale in the Taylors' Hall. It was

probably the unsold portion of the old stock of Plymouth and Champion's first factories, which it was attempted to clear off in that manner.

Several apprentice painters were engaged by Champion in January, 1772. The first one was Henry Bone, who had begun to serve his time at Plymouth. He remained at Bristol until the closing of the works, and then repaired to London, where he acquired a great celebrity as a miniature and enamel painter. The second was W. Stephen. Three other apprentices were indentured in succession.

In the same year, August, 1772, appeared the first announcement of a sale by auction of the produce of the Castle Green factory, also at the Taylors' Hall. It comprised: "Very elegant figures, beautiful vases, jars, and beakers, with all kinds of useful china, blue and white and enamell'd."

In the month of November an advertisement was inserted in the *Bristol Journal*, in which we read the following: "As this manufactory is not at present sufficiently known, it may not be improper to remark that this Porcelain is wholly free from the Imperfection in wearing which the English china usually has, and that its Composition is equal in fineness to the East Indian, and will wear as well. The enamell'd Ware, which is rendered nearly as cheap as the English blue and white, comes very near and in some pieces equal to Dresden, which this work more Particularly imitates."

The prospects were greatly improved when, in 1773, Champion, anxious of taking to himself the unrestricted control of affairs, made overtures to his partner for the purchase of the patent. Cookworthy was then close to seventy years of age, and engaged in many other pursuits. He agreed willingly to transfer his rights to Champion, on the condition that a sum of money should be paid to him annually equivalent to the value of the Cornish clay and stone purchased during the year by the Bristol factory. All arrangements having been concluded, the patent was assigned to Champion in 1774.

It had still eight years to run. Nevertheless, Champion, arguing that the inventor had not yet been able to reap any pecuniary advantage from his discovery, presented a petition to Parliament for the grant of an additional term of fourteen years. Josiah Wedgwood opposed the application, on behalf of the Staffordshire potters, who were fully alive to the benefit that would be derived from the introduction of china clay into the white earthenware bodies, and objected to being deprived any longer from the liberty of making use of it. The Bill was passed by the House of Commons without amendment in 1775; but when discussed before the Lords, two clauses were introduced into the original Act. One of them required that Champion would enroll an accurate specification of the constitution of his bodies and glazes; the other was that the use of Cornish materials would be thrown open to all pottery manufacturers for any

purpose of their trade, except the making of hard porcelain. Such costly litigation involved Champion in financial difficulties, and the development of his manufacture was rather hampered than assisted by his partial victory. Still, full of confidence in his forthcoming triumph, he continued to improve the quality of his productions; those of that period surpass all that had been done before and was done afterwards. To that time belong the fine hexagonal vases in the Dresden or Worcester style, the pride of the best collections of Bristol china; the masterly figures richly enamelled; the biscuit medallions framed in hand-made garlands of delicate flowers; and also the historical tea services so often mentioned and described. I need only bring to recollection that one of them had been ordered by Edmund Burke for presentation to his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, of Bristol, as a memento of his electoral campaign in 1774; the other, still more elaborate in treatment, was expressly made in the same year to be offered to Mrs. Burke by Champion and his wife.

These were evidently exceptional works, very superior to anything that was daily made for sale. As a rule, the Bristol china was rather scantily decorated. We know some examples of tea-sets finely painted with cameo heads on brown ground, and also a few small vases and beakers, the floral decoration of which rises above the ordinary run, but they are extremely rare. When the year 1776 came, Champion's efforts seem to have been

well nigh exhausted; he was losing all hopes of ever obtaining public support for his more meritorious productions; from that moment he limited himself to the making of plain and cheap domestic ware. Of this latter kind there is a great abundance in the English collections.

The opening of a warehouse in London in 1777 was his last move; but it proved of little avail to retrieve his fallen fortunes. Work was gradually coming to a standstill at the factory; no more apprentices were taken. A symbolic figure of Grief weeping over a funeral urn, made in 1779, to commemorate the death of Champion's eldest daughter, proves, however, that work was not completely abandoned. This figure is now in America, in the possession of a member of the family.

Nightingale has reprinted the priced catalogue of a sale that took place at Christie's in February, 1780. The miserable figure affixed to each lot shows plainly that Bristol china could no longer expect to gratify the taste of the public.

In 1781 the firm which had so far been Richard Champion and Co. became R. Champion only. His partners had all deserted him. Deprived of the mainstay of their pecuniary assistance, no other course was open to him but to retire from the struggle. To the very last he had fought bravely against uncontrollable difficulties. In placing real hard porcelain on the market, he was fully convinced that the new ware would one day supplant all previous kinds of English china; but the

buying public could not be made to understand the practical advantages of the hard porcelain and patronise it in preference to the others. It was a game of chance ; he played the cards well, but his hand was bad, and he lost the game. No one, in his place, could have done better, for he was by no means reckless or negligent in his speculations, but a clear-headed and energetic business man.

Richard Champion had entered the Castle Green factory a rich and prosperous man ; ten years had scarcely elapsed since he had assumed its management, and he had to leave it, ruined and disheartened. No question was ever raised of reviving the ill-fated concern, and the premises were at once let to a pipe maker named Carey. The patent was sold to the New Hall China Co. of Staffordshire.

Through the influence of his staunch friend, E. Burke, Champion was appointed Deputy Paymaster of the Forces ; but having lost that position shortly afterwards through a change of Government, he sailed for America, where he died, near Camden, South Carolina, October 7th, 1791, in his forty-eighth year.

II.

All I have said respecting the technical character of the Plymouth porcelain applies likewise to that made at Bristol on exactly the same principles. A few additional

remarks on the subject may, however, be introduced here.

As it appears from the original recipes that are known to us, the relative proportions of the constituents of the paste were liable to be frequently altered; this accounts for the singular difference exhibited by the various descriptions of Bristol porcelain. Cookworthy recommends a mixture of Gowan clay and stone (*i.e.*, kaolin and felspar) in equal quantities. A composition formed on these bases was manifestly adopted for a time. Evidently, the felspathic glaze could not be used upon a body of such a fusible nature; the mass would melt and the piece collapse in the firing before the glaze had attained its proper point of fusion. In such cases, and to avoid an incompatible association, the ware was glazed with lead and alkaline compounds, as was customary in the manufacture of frit china. Collectors have often expressed their surprise at finding that a large percentage of the specimens bearing the Bristol mark are covered with a very soft glaze. They have consequently come to the conclusion that soft china was extensively made. This opinion, which is proved to be correct with respect to some ware of the early period, is not quite warranted with what regards the productions of the Castle Green factory. Fusible as the paste may be in some instances, no other ingredients enter in its composition but those which, in different proportions, make true hard porcelain. The ware is akin to our modern Parian, also composed

of kaolin and felspar, and glazed with lead, but its nature differs entirely from that of the Chelsea and Worcester porcelain.

Leaving aside a few exceptional cases, such as the one I have just referred to, we find that the essential characteristic of the Bristol paste, when it had assumed its definite form, is, on the contrary, a degree of hardness superior to that possessed by the Oriental, Dresden, and modern Sèvres porcelain. According to Prof. Church's analysis, the average of fluxing material it contains is under four per cent. Its extraordinary refractoriness was the pride of the manufacturers. An experiment they were wont to execute for the enlightenment of the unbeliever was to place a piece of ordinary English china inside one of their own making, and send them both to the oven. After the firing it could be seen that the enclosed article was melted into a shapeless lump, while the Bristol piece was uninjured and in splendid condition.

The glaze, when obtained with the Gowan stone, looked rather thin, unequally spread, and dulled by minute air bubbles. This stone contained felspar in variable quantity, but that material was never chemically separated. When used in its natural state, the stone was often contaminated by the presence of extraneous elements, which injured the quality of the glaze and prevented it from being as glossy and limpid as it should have been.

Great attention is paid to the spiral lines or ridges that mark the surface of the Bristol porcelain. This

effect, which is simply due to the pressure of the thrower's fingers when he raised the clay into shape upon the wheel—the “wreathing,” as it is technically called—is common to pieces of other origin fashioned in the same manner. The finger marks may be perfectly smoothed by the final turning, but they re-appear more or less plainly in the firing. If they are not noticeable on the ware of other provenance, it is because the process of using moulds was used in preference to throwing and turning, in other china factories.

The inspection of a broken piece affords an easy way of discriminating between the true Bristol paste and that of the frit porcelain. In the first instance, the fracture, neat and shiny, shows that the mass has been equally melted by incipient vitrification; in the other, we notice that it contains some particles which, scarcely altered by the firing, are united together by the fluxing vehicle; this aspect has been appropriately called the “granulated texture.”

It is as well that no further attempt should be made to resume the manufacture of hard porcelain in England. Not that there is a deficiency of suitable materials in the country for the making of a ware as fine as any made on the Continent. What will always stand in the way of its being safe and profitable is the want, in our manufacturing districts, of the highly refractory clay required for such accessory commodities as bricks and saggars. An oven built with our ordinary bricks, and the saggars made

with the same clay, cannot bear the high degree of temperature that has to be reached in the firing of hard porcelain. Such a structure would be so rapidly damaged and placed out of service that the heavy expense incurred in keeping it in repair would alone raise the cost of production so high as to render the manufacture altogether unpracticable.

III.

Rarity rules the price of old china as well as quality. The saying is commonplace enough, but I can give no other explanation of the exorbitant prices sometimes given for Bristol specimens. Surely, hard porcelain is not a rarity in itself, but the limited quantity of the ware produced in England has invested genuine examples with a somewhat artificial value. Often a higher sum has been paid for a modest tea-pot of Bristol make than for many a rich and attractive vase of other manufacture. Surprising as the result may appear, the rise of such an infatuation may be easily accounted for. So few were the articles of any artistic pretension made at the Castle Green factory, so rapidly did they find a fixed place in the museums and collections, that for sheer lack of better pieces the amateur had to fall back upon the still available "cottage china," and select out of the domestic ware representative specimens which, if they were of rather indifferent quality, had at least the merit of showing the coveted mark of Bristol.

No original style of decoration was ever evolved at Bristol out of the imitations of continental porcelain to which the painters strictly confined their work. Dresden and Sèvres supplied the larger part of the designs. It is from that source that they borrowed the elegant disposition of ribbands, sprays of flowers, and garlands which enliven the tea and dessert services, the staple production of the factory. The fine tea-pot, long in the possession of the Cookworthy family, and now in the Schreiber collection, represents the earlier tendencies of the manufacture and a set purpose of rivalling the richly-decorated articles of Worcester and Chelsea. Excellent as may be the painting and gilding of that specimen, the harsh, dry, and smudgy blue ground applied over the glaze is a very poor imitation of the deep under-glaze mazarine blue it had been attempted to reproduce. Such a style was not persisted in. This almost unique example of it bears the Plymouth mark in gold; it is, however, believed that it was made at Bristol at the time when Cookworthy was still connected with the firm.

Among the purely ornamental pieces attempted during a very short period, a special mention must be made of the hexagonal vases completed with an elaborate decoration in the style of the Worcester vases of the same shape. But specimens of that order are so rare as to warrant the belief that they were intended for show and not for sale.

A few exceptional tea sets were made for presentation. These were very superior in treatment to the current

articles of manufacture. In the collection of Mr. A. Trapnell, of Bristol, may be seen odd specimens of these services, now dispersed, and to which we have already had occasion to allude. The following ones have become, as it were, historical:—

The Smith service, made upon E. Burke's order in 1774. We see upon it the green garland of laurels so frequently repeated afterwards that it is now considered as a typical pattern of the Bristol porcelain. Forms and decorations were taken from Dresden models. When sold separately, the tea-pot of the original set found a purchaser at £210.

The service presented to Mrs. Burke by Champion and his wife. It is adorned with white medallions, in which Liberty and Justice are represented, and has a bright ground of canary yellow. In the selection—and in the treatment of this allegorical subject—of a scope evidently beyond the painter's capability—the intention is obviously more praiseworthy than the deed.

Another service, ordered by Sir Robert Smyth as a wedding present to his wife in 1776, has classical heads painted in grisaille upon a brown ground, with festoons of green enamel.

Lastly, a service of about the same design, made for Mr. Plummer, M.P. for Hereford, is also represented in the same collection.

It cannot be denied that none of the above sets—the highest expression of Bristol china painting—approaches

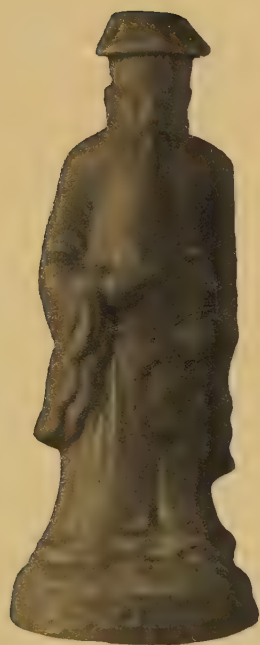
BRISTOL.

No. Chinese Figure of hard
porcelain, marked and
dated 1750.

No. Sauce-boat of soft paste,
marked "Bristol."

For full collection.





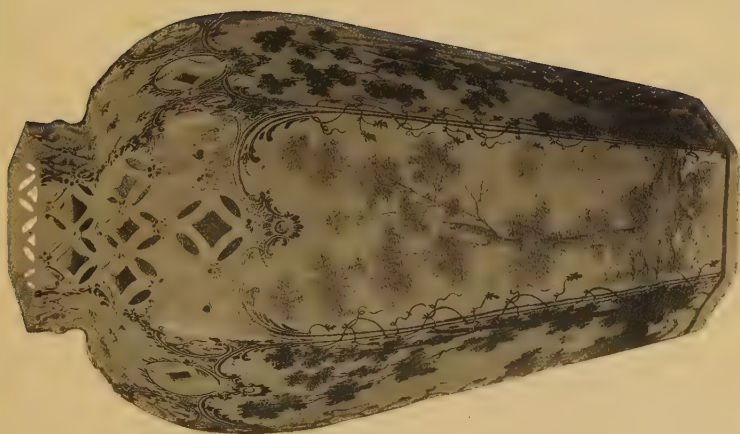
BRISTOL.

No. 60.—Vase of hexagonal shape
painted with trees and
landscapes.

No. 21. Vase and Cover of white
china, with subjects
of figures.

✱

BRISTOL COLLECTION



BRISTOL.

No. 62 - Figure of a Shepherd.
Hard paste.

18

TRAPHIM COLLECTION





BRISTOL.

No. 13.—Tea-pot, with classical
heads in "grisaille."

No. 14.—Heart-shaped Dish, in the
Sèvres Style.

8

TRAPKILL GALLERY 106





BRISTOL.

No. 65. Hexagonal Vase, painted
with landscapes.



V. & A. MUSEUM.



BRISTOL.

No. 66.—Biscuit Medallions.

TRAPNELL COLLECTION.



in charm and brilliancy of aspect the gorgeous productions of Chelsea and Worcester. One may understand that such inadequate efforts contributed but little to the artistic development of Champion's enterprise.

An exception must be made with respect to the few figures executed at the same period; the modeller was a clever artist, and the reproductions of his work were treated with great care and ability. The subjects do not, it is true, exhibit the graceful fantasy and feminine elegance so pleasant in some of the earlier statuettes of soft china; nor is the gilding and enamelling of the surface so rich and delicate. But in their sober and semi-classical style, in their perfection of execution, the Bristol figures display a merit of their own which render them equal to any of the best examples that might be brought in comparison to them. This is fully illustrated by the specimens preserved in the Schreiber collection. There are several sets of four figures, namely, the Elements, the Seasons, the Quarters of the Globe, pairs of Shepherds and Shepherdesses, Boy and Girl Musicians, Turkish Man and Lady, etc.; and, to be placed on the first rank, a very fine group of Venus and Adonis.

In the charming biscuit plaques, on which wreaths of hand-made flowers encircle either an armorial shield or a medallion portrait, we have an individual work of the Bristol potter far superior to anything of the kind ever attempted in England. This work demands a great dexterity of hand. Each blossom, leaf, stem, etc., is

formed separately by the operator, and all is mounted together after the manner used for the making of artificial flowers. Hard porcelain, which fires without losing anything of the shape and sharpness of the details, was particularly adapted to the production of these marvels of minute handiwork; the glaze might have partly hidden their amazing delicacy, so these plaques were always left in the biscuit state. They are usually of oval or round shape, and under six inches in height. One of them bears the following memorandum written by its former possessor: "Specimen of Bristol china, modelled by Thomas Briand of Derby, 1777." The Franklin medalion of the Edkins collection and the two remarkable portraits in the possession of Mr. Trapnell are by an unknown artist.

During the declining years of the Castle Green factory cheap articles were turned out in abundance. Richness and elegance of decoration were no longer depended upon to establish a larger sale, so the ware was simply painted with small sprays of brilliant flowers, or more usually with cheap patterns in green enamel. Gilding was very seldom used in connection with these latter, and the pieces were not often marked. Great stress continued to be laid on the particular quality of the Bristol porcelain, which allowed it to stand "wear and tear" better than any other china, and also on the cheapness of its cost.

We have no evidence of the process of transfer

PL. XVIII. **BRISTOL.**
Statuette of a Shepherdess,
marked T^o

See p. 100, col. 1.





printing having ever been practised at Bristol, but pieces of Oriental china are sometimes seen which were so decorated in England, probably at Liverpool, and, on account of the hard paste, such specimens have erroneously been attributed to Bristol.

IV.

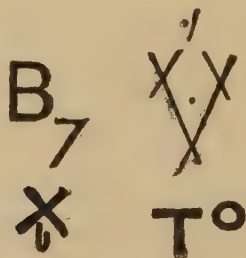
As it has been stated before, a few pieces of very early make bear the word BRISTOLL in relief letters; in some instances the mark is obliterated with a leaf painted over it in green enamel. This may be no more than the cunning device resorted to by a private enameller or a china dealer who wanted to conceal the source of his supply.

The Plymouth mark, the symbolic sign for Tin, continued to be employed during the short time in which the Castle Green works were carried on under the name of Cookworthy and Co. This sign appears, traced in gold, upon some of the finest pieces of Bristol manufacture, such as some of the hexagonal vases and the remarkable tea-pot, long preserved in the Cookworthy family, of which I have already spoken. Occasionally it is seen associated with the characteristic cross. This cross and a capital B are the most distinctive marks; but the specimen on which they are found must be of hard porcelain; in any other case one must recollect that these signs may represent various places or names of makers. The crossed swords of Dresden were freely appropriated.

All the above marks are generally accompanied with a number. The figure corresponds to the numeral order in which an apprentice had been engaged. Each painter had thus a private number which he affixed to his own work. Henry Bone, the first apprentice taken by Champion, is known to have signed with the figure 1; William Stephen, the second apprentice, with the figure 2; and so on with the others.

The two letters T^o, seen impressed upon some of the best Bristol figures, are said to stand for the name of Tebo, a French modeller, who was at one time in the employment of Josiah Wedgwood at Etruria. No conclusive evidence has ever ratified this gratuitous conjecture. Tebo is not a French name; in England, however, that of Thibeault may have been phonetically spelt in that manner. If this be the case, the artist himself would not have introduced the letter "o" in his monogram. The point is, therefore, far from being settled.

All the information necessary for a thorough study of the history of the manufactory will be found in the work of H. Owen, *Two Centuries of Ceramic Art in Bristol*.



MARKS.

NEW HALL.

THE transfer of Champion's patent to a company of Staffordshire potters is of historical importance. It laid the foundation of a prosperous branch of the ceramic industry which, with the exception of Littler's abortive venture, had never been carried on in the district of the Potteries. Through that purchase the sole right of employing Cornish materials for the manufacture of porcelain was vested in a group of local manufacturers. Preliminary experiments were made at Tunstall on a small scale. Champion himself—who had temporarily settled at Newcastle-under-Lyme for that purpose in November, 1781—superintended these experiments. He left in 1782, when the business had been duly established at the New Hall, Shelton, near Hanley. The company was then composed of Samuel Hollins, Jacob Warburton, Charles Bagnall, all master potters of experience, and William Clowes, a "sleeping" partner. John Daniel was entrusted with the practical management, and joined the partnership shortly afterwards.

One might have expected that, inaugurated under the inspiring influence of Richard Champion, the new

works would have brought out at least a cheap edition of the Bristol porcelain. But it was nothing of the kind. We do not recognise in the authenticated productions of New Hall any of the sterling qualities, technical or artistic, for which those of the Castle Green factory are so justly praised. The company had simply purchased the patent, with the intention of applying the rights it conferred upon them as it would best serve their commercial interests. They thought it unnecessary to secure the co-operation of any of the well-trained workmen and talented artists of the dispersed staff, or to acquire the valuable stock of moulds and models formed by Champion. At any rate, none of the fine figures and ornamental pieces of which it consisted are known to have been reproduced at New Hall.

The company made a clean start, acting on a strictly practical plan; cheapness of production and ready profits were the exclusive consideration. As a matter of course, to maintain the costly standard of hardness of the Bristol porcelain would have been in direct opposition with their settled line of conduct. A softer mixture of the Cornish materials, which could be fired at a much lower degree of heat, was contrived and adopted. Owing to the high percentage of fusible ingredients introduced into it, the composition was a much debased form of hard porcelain, if it could still be called by that name. The china made on such principles, bearing no mark or any other distinctive signs, is not easily distinguishable from the mongrel

ware, slightly translucent, produced by several makers of the same period.

Since Champion's application for the extension of his patent, and the fierce opposition raised to it by Josiah Wedgwood, had been discussed in Parliament, the importance of introducing china clay and stone in the manufacture of pottery in general had been brought to the knowledge of the Staffordshire manufacturers. They all wanted to try the long-forbidden materials. To sell to the trade the clay and stone in the raw state, or some preparations and combinations of them, became the most remunerative part of the Company's business. I think one may trace to the sale of these ready-made compounds the making of the detestable china of which innumerable examples are still to be found in the middle-class households of the Potteries. Their chief characteristics are, as a rule, that they were so imperfectly fired that any of the fatty or colouring substances they may have contained has permeated the glaze and indelibly stained the body. The quality of the decoration is on a par with that of the paste. It consists in cheap and vulgar patterns, either clumsily painted by hand or printed in outline and filled in with showy enamel colours.

Hunting for specimens of New Hall "hard porcelain"—a pursuit once indulged in by collectors—is now out of fashion. It was scarcely worth the trouble, for the best representative of the ware, if it may be of some value to

complete a comprehensive collection of English china, will certainly not embellish it.

In 1796 the term of the patent had come to an end. The firm had still an extensive sale for their ready-made mixtures, and they continued to manufacture the same kind of porcelain they had introduced in the district. But soon they found themselves distanced by several successful competitors. Better processes had come to the front. Bone china had proved so superior to their degenerated productions that they had to adopt it in 1812, and give up their obsolete methods. This retarded but little the final closing of the works, which took place in 1825.

The words "New Hall," enclosed in a double circle, and printed in dark red over the glaze, is the only mark known to have been used. The statement that it was employed only after 1820 is contradicted by its presence on specimens obviously older in date.

CHURCH GRESLEY.

FOLLOWING the example of previous writers, I have entered the name of Church Gresley on the list of factories that must have a special notice, although the account may offer little interest to the collector.

My first statement is bound to be that no specimen has ever turned up that may be undeniably attributed to that place. Having said this, I might perhaps be told that I am dispensed from going any further into the subject. But, unimportant as they be, the works have a history of their own. The few data that vouch for their shadowy existence may become of some interest on the day when a lucky collector happens to lay hands upon some authenticated pieces of Church Gresley porcelain, and is thus enabled to show us the chief points through which the ware may be recognised.

Sir Nigel Gresley, the founder and first proprietor of the factory—"poor Sir Nigel," as Wedgwood called him—appears to have been an impecunious gentleman, whose embarrassed circumstances led to seeking in industrial enterprise the means of eking out a much reduced income.

He was Lord of the Manor of Burslem in the Staffordshire Potteries, and resided at Knipersley Hall, an estate in the neighbourhood; financial difficulties obliged him to quit the place in 1765. He retired to the family seat, Church Gresley Hall, near Burton-on-Trent, Derbyshire. Whether his close association with the staple trade of the Potteries had induced him to believe that large profits could be derived from the manufacture of porcelain, or whether he was actuated by sheer love of the ceramic art, has not transpired. Be that as it may, it is duly recorded that in 1795 some outbuildings had been added to the hall—workshops and kilns—in which some kind of porcelain was being made by a small staff of operatives drawn from the Midland counties factories.

Sir Nigel himself superintended the work; his daughters helped in decorating the ware. In that year, 1795, W. T. Coffee, the Derby modeller, was specially engaged, and spent the summer in executing a few models at the rate of eighteen shillings per week. What was, after that, the progress of the business has not been stated, but it was certainly not a success. A colliery proprietor of the district, one Mr. Nadin, intervened in 1800, and took over the factory from Sir Nigel Gresley, who had at last recognized his incapacity to conduct it in a profitable way. Nadin obtained from Queen Charlotte, the patroness of the potter's art, an order for a dinner service. It was to be "as fine as it could be made," and the price agreed upon was £700. But it was found that the

imperfect state of the manufacturing processes did not permit to do anything better than the spill vases, small baskets, and other little articles—with a speciality of “boots, shoes, and slippers”—to which the turn-out appears to have been so far limited. When they tried to make plates, dishes, tureens, and pieces of large size, the ware cracked and warped in the firing, and they had to give up an order that they were unable to execute.

Mr. Burton, of Linton, Derbyshire, succeeded Nadin in the management of the concern. He was not to be more successful than the previous owners, and in his hands the works came gradually to an end in 1808, to be heard of no more.

LIVERPOOL.

WE have good cause to believe that frit porcelain has been made in the town of Liverpool. In our collections we notice that some odd specimens of undetermined character are confidently labelled as representative of the ware. Nothing more definite has been settled on the subject. The records are open to various interpretations; the insufficiently authenticated pieces give them but little support. One may still ask: What was the Liverpool china? Wide is the field of conjectures; numerous are the obstacles that impede a thoroughly efficient course of investigation.

Liverpool was at one time an important centre of ceramic industry. Delft ware that could bear comparison with that which came from Holland, salt-glaze, tortoise-shell, and cream-coloured pottery, which competed creditably with the productions of Staffordshire, were manufactured on a large scale; porcelain may also have been made, but if its fabrication had been fully developed, all remnants of it could not have disappeared; yet no fully certificated example has ever been discovered.

A certain suspicion should always be entertained

LIVERPOOL (?)

No. 6. **Mug, decorated in Sadler's
transfer printing.**

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whenever we meet with the word "porcelain" applied, in ancient records, to the work of the potter. The faïence of Delft was usually called porcelain; when Oriental ware was intended it was distinguished from the former by the word "true" porcelain. This was customary not only in Holland, but also in other countries. A small palace built, under Louis XIV., at the far end of the Versailles Park, and the structure of which disappeared entirely under a covering of moulded and painted faïence, was named "Trianon de porcelain." The term often meant nothing more than white ware. Josiah Wedgwood felt no compunction in styling himself, in the French translations of his pamphlets, "Manufacturier en porcelain." It may be fairly estimated that the larger part of the painted Delft ware made by the Liverpool potters went by the name of porcelain, however different its technical composition was from that of the English and Oriental china. This is evidently the case with the white and blue productions of the factory of Reid and Co., at work since 1755. Without questioning the probability of a tentative manufacture having been carried on for a short period in one of the earthenware works, one must not lose sight of the fact that no special porcelain manufactory has ever existed in the town.

None of his fellow-masters prosecuted experiments in that direction with so much earnestness as Richard Chaffers, the leading Delft potter of Liverpool. A chance meeting with one Podmore—no doubt the same whom

we have already heard of in connection with the formation of the Worcester Company—afforded him an opportunity of securing the advice and services of a man fully conversant with the secrets of china making; he engaged him at once to act as foreman in the projected enterprise. On the recommendation of Podmore, Cornish soap-rock was to be used as the foundation of a good china body. To procure a regular supply of this material, Chaffers decided to take a journey to Cornwall. He provided himself with letters of recommendation to several land-owners, and started on horse-back, carrying in his saddle-bags a sum of one thousand pounds to meet the cost of his prospecting expedition. Excavations were undertaken in the Mullion parish, but without result. The money being spent, and further researches appearing hopeless, the unfortunate prospector dismissed his gang of men and started on the return journey. He was overtaken by a stray workman who had followed a track of his own, and had run after him bearing the glorious news that he had found a rich vein of the long-looked-for rock on the other side of the hill. Having ascertained the truth of the man's statement, Chaffers lost no time in organizing the working of the mine and securing the lease of it. He then returned to Liverpool, leaving an agent on the spot, who was to keep him acquainted with the progress of the diggings, and forward him at intervals cargoes of the precious material. The correspondence between Chaffers and his agent shows

that the raising of the clay was steadily prosecuted from 1756 to 1766.

An advertisement which appeared in the *Liverpool Advertiser* for December, 1756, brings to the knowledge of the public the new ware, made by Chaffers and Co., china manufacturers, which is said to have been "proved with boiling water before being exhibited for sale." Knowing that it was the ambition of the maker to find a substitute for the Delft ware which the neat pottery of Staffordshire was fast ousting from the market, we may surmise that the "non-cracking" articles introduced by Chaffers were nothing else but a particular white earthenware, containing soap-rock in its composition. A tea-set of the same ware was presented to Josiah Wedgwood, whom R. Chaffers regarded as the leading master all potters should endeavour to imitate. The answer of the great man savours somewhat of polite irony. Comparing the ware to his own, he confesses himself beaten, especially on the score of the colours, which he acknowledges he could not produce under five pounds, while he is told that they cost only fifty shillings to the sender. Nothing in his remarks suggests that a translucent ware was in question. There is a great amount of white earthenware pieces, decorated in the Indo-European style, still awaiting recognition, which might be taken, with some plausibility, as representing Chaffers' competitive efforts.

A small collection of china of various origin passed from the possession of Chaffers' descendants into that of

Joseph Mayer; it is now in the Liverpool Museum. Some of the pieces are of Oriental porcelain; others are considered to be of the potter's own make. Among them is a small pounce-powder box, inscribed in blue, "Richard Chaffers, 1769." It may have been made for one of his relatives, but not by Chaffers himself, who died in 1765. The insignificance of the object might suggest that porcelain was still rare at the factory where it came from, for such a trifle having been thought worth dating and inscribing. Some doubt may also have been thrown on the precise origin of the china bell-shaped mugs, decorated with the portrait of the King of Prussia, the Liver bird, and local names, in Sadler's transfer printing. It is well known that Sadler did not print exclusively for the Liverpool potters, but for the whole pottery trade; not to speak of his trials on Oriental china.

Christian succeeded Chaffers as proprietor of the works. His business consisted chiefly in making Staffordshire ware, salt-glaze, tortoise-shell, and cream colour. He may have continued the experiments of his predecessor, but he did not find them remunerative, for in 1775 he sold the remainder of the Mullion lease to the Worcester Company, having himself no further use for soap-rock.

Seth Pennington is likewise credited with having made porcelain. His large punch-bowls, his handsome vases and beakers, which rival in quality of glaze and excellence of blue painting the finest importations from

Holland may undoubtedly have gone by that name; but we are still waiting for a tangible illustration of his power as china manufacturer.

The report that both these masters may have been engaged at one moment in china manufacture rests on the evidence of a note-book written in the hand of Sadler, the printer. It contains the so-called recipes of Christian's and Pennington's porcelain. The first compound may have been used by Chaffers; neither of them would produce translucent ware. Testimonies of this order are far from conclusive; a few authenticated examples would be of much greater assistance to settle the question.

No such difficulties exist with regard to the porcelain manufactured at the Herculaneum works, on the banks of the Mersey, between 1800 and 1841. It is marked with the full name of the place, sometimes accompanied with a crown or an image of the Liver, the crest of the Liverpool borough. But it offers comparatively little interest either for the historian, the potter, or the artist; no special improvement can be traced in connection with it; its aim was chiefly to reproduce, not unsuccessfully, the work of Davenport and other Staffordshire potters of the decadent period.

The notice of *The Art of Pottery in Liverpool*, by Joseph Mayer, is full of interesting particulars. The reader should, however, be warned that they are not to be accepted without corroboration from other sources.

LOWESTOFT.

W. CHAFFERS is responsible for the spread of a theory regarding the Lowestoft factory and its productions, which, after it had been provisionally endorsed by the majority of collectors, turned out to be one of the worst mystifications recorded in ceramic history. It must be conceded, in mitigation of the offence, that seldom had such a crop of apparently admissible evidence turned up to substantiate an ill-grounded belief.

On a visit that the author of *Marks and Monograms*, in quest of information, paid to the town of Lowestoft, he came across numerous pieces of porcelain of very distinctive character, bearing the crest or initials of the old families in which they had long been preserved, and all of which were said, by their possessors, to have been made in the local factory that existed at one time. He concluded, naturally enough, that he was on the way to the discovery of a most important and so far unsuspected centre of production—a too-hasty conclusion that a prejudiced course of investigation, unfortunately, came to strengthen.

LOWESTOFT.

No. 63.—Tea-pot of soft china,
inscribed and dated.

By and permission of Mr. George R. Harcourt.

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No. 64. Saucer-dish, with a view of
Lowestoft Church.

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The ware that he soon felt himself warranted to call "Lowestoft porcelain" bore, it is true, decorations of European design, but was no other than the inferior Oriental china that the East India Companies threw wholesale upon the market during the eighteenth century. In building up his lame theory, Chaffers had neglected to take into consideration a few points of primary importance.

All the ancient inhabitants of the town who could remember anything of the extinct factory agreed in saying that it was a small place, with only one biscuit oven and one enamelling kiln, and that, at the best of times, the number of persons it employed did not exceed seventy. Now, if the inquirer had not willingly lost sight of the fact that the very same kind of porcelain as that of which he was endeavouring to localise the origin was commonly found in every country which had had commercial intercourse with the East, not only in Europe, but also in America—where Boston and Salem were the centres of a large importation trade—and that many ancient families inhabiting the sea-port towns of those countries boast the possession of tea or dinner services of similar china, emblazoned with the arms or inscribed with the initials of an ancestor who had obtained them from the East Indies; if he had not conveniently forgotten that odd specimens of the ware are found in every collection and curiosity shop at home and abroad, then he might have suspected that such a colossal supply

could only have come from a manufacturing centre of amazing magnitude, and not from a small factory at work for a few years on the coast of England. He also failed to observe that the paste of the china was manifestly of Oriental character, and that there is no record of hard porcelain having ever been made at Lowestoft.

On the other hand, a coarse kind of soft china, usually painted in under-glaze blue, has been traced as the undeniable product of the Lowestoft factory, and a sufficient number of examples of that class can now be produced to dispel any doubt as to the precise description of the ware that was made there, and put an end to all controversy.

To the facility that the situation of Lowestoft offered for trading with Holland by way of Yarmouth must be attributed the existence of a petty company of merchants who joined to the importation of Delft faïence the manufacture, on a small scale, of a pottery of the same description. White and blue faïence pieces, inscribed with local names, and dated as early as 1755, seem to indicate that the pottery-works were in operation about that time. The making of soft china was added shortly afterwards. A heap of discarded plaster moulds was unearthed from the site of the old works in 1902; it included moulds for embossed sauce-boats, jugs, and a globular tea-pot upon which the date 1762 was incised in the plaster. A tea-pot of the same

shape is reproduced on the accompanying plate ; but the faintly raised decoration which appears in the mould is, on this example, reproduced in colour. In the same year a queer nine-sided ink-pot was manufactured ; it bears a pseudo-Chinese ornamentation in under-glaze blue, with the monogram "R.B. 1762." Robert Browne, for whom the piece was painted and inscribed, was the head of the firm till 1771. This unimpeachable testimony of the true style of the Lowestoft fabrication is now in the possession of Mr. Arthur Crisp, in whose collection are preserved six other ink-pots of the same shape, together with many other genuine pieces, decorated in the same manner, and bearing dates ranging from 1762 to 1782. Among these may be mentioned a tea service which has the name "Elizath Buckle," and the date 1768, painted in blue. It was executed by Robert Allen, a nephew of the worthy dame, who was still serving his apprenticeship, but, in after times, became the manager of the works. Also a number of small articles bearing the words "A trifle from Lowestoft" or "A trifle from Yarmouth." None of these specimens have anything in common with the so-called Lowestoft china.

A family tradition discloses the way in which porcelain making was introduced at Lowestoft. It is reported that Robert Browne, anxious to master a process unknown to him and from which he expected great results, repaired to London disguised as a workman, and in

that capacity took employment in one of the china factories, either Bow or Chelsea. The discipline of former years had somewhat relaxed in these establishments, and he had no difficulty in worming out from one of the foremen, in exchange for adequate remuneration, the secret of the mixture, with instructions about practical manipulations. The object he had in view appears to have been most easily attained; scarcely three weeks had elapsed when he returned to his own works, provided with sufficient information to start china making at once, without calling any outsider to his assistance. It is needless to observe that what he learned in this manner did not put him in the position of producing hard porcelain, and that he could not have made any on this basis.

As it stands now, the history of the Lowestoft works is a short one to tell. A better knowledge of the exact nature of the owners' business might have been obtained from an examination of the papers and account books of the old firm; they may or may not be still in existence; at any rate, their contents have never been investigated. We know very little besides the fact that frit porcelain was made for the first time in 1762, and that the factory was closed in 1803.

This article will, however, have fulfilled its purpose if it establishes, once for all, not so much what was the true Lowestoft ware, but what it was not. One may well wonder how it came to pass that the name of the

obscure Lowestoft factory could ever have been mentioned in connection with a particular ware which in every country where the unmistakable specimens of it are met with in large quantities, is recognised as being of Oriental provenance. As no conjecture has so far been advanced in answer to that query, I will venture to present a not improbable solution of the problem.

That they never manufactured such a porcelain at Lowestoft has no longer to be demonstrated; it remains to be proved that they sold it, and that the misconception as to its origin arose from no other cause. We must remember, in the first instance, that the proprietors of the works were also ship-owners, conducting a small trade with Holland. They exported English clays and raw materials for the use of the Delft potters, and brought back, in return, articles of Dutch faïence, often painted with names and inscriptions, for which they accepted commissions from private customers. We know, next, that Rotterdam was the centre of the mighty commerce carried on between Holland and China. It may, then, be fairly assumed that while engaged in the trade of common Delft ware, they conceived the idea of entering into communication with the wholesale importers of Chinese porcelain, from whom they could purchase large supplies, and to establish in England a highly-remunerative branch of business by underselling the East India Company.

It was customary with the Dutch firms to send over

to their foreign settlements shapes and designs obtained from European sources, to be reproduced by native hands. Models from Dresden, Sèvres, and even from Leeds or the Staffordshire potteries, were constantly copied in Oriental porcelain. The Lowestoft people did what all other merchants had done before them, and through the same channel forwarded to China the designs of coats-of-arms, English mottoes, and initials that were to be painted on the porcelain they had undertaken to supply. In the Henry Willett Collection is an armorial plate, decorated in the usual Indo-European style, and inscribed, at the back, with its certificate of origin: CANTON IN CHINA 24th Jan. 1791. Commissions of that kind were received from the leading families of the neighbourhood, and duly executed; hence the number of local patronymics that Chaffers noticed on the porcelain in the possession of many inhabitants of the town, who honestly believed that it had been made by the very men from whom it had been purchased.

In 1770, the business had taken sufficient extension to induce the partners to open a warehouse in Queen Street, Cheapside. Their agent, Clark Dunford, inserted in the London papers an announcement in which he advertised "a large selection of Lowestoft china." We possess no information as to what may have been the exact description of the goods advertised under that name, but we may safely surmise that it was something superior to "A trifle from Lowestoft" or any of the

articles we know to have been the staple production of the works. It seems that a more attractive exhibition might have been formed in the show-room by a stock of Chinese porcelain imported by the Lowestoft Company.

I feel convinced that conclusive proofs of this elucidation of the Lowestoft puzzle shall one day come to light; in the meantime, it cannot be denied that it is strongly supported by the following facts. It is recorded, on good authority, that the ruin of the Company was caused by the wreck of one of their vessels carrying a cargo of porcelain, and the burning, by the French army, of the warehouse they had established at Rotterdam. The idea that the enormous amount of ware required to load a vessel and to fill a large warehouse in Rotterdam, not to speak of the one in London, could have been supplied by a one-oven factory, is too ludicrous to be entertained for one moment, and it may be dismissed without further comment.

It has been suggested that the Lowestoft painters may have decorated ware imported from China in the white. By reason of the ubiquity of the porcelain decorated in the accredited style, and the small number of hands employed at the factory, such a suggestion is equally untenable. A hard porcelain tea-pot, unmistakably painted by a Chinese hand, is marked "Allen, Lowestoft." Robert Allen was manager of the works up to the last. When they closed, he set up a small china

shop in the town, himself decorating part of the articles he sold. His supply was drawn from various sources, including Oriental. Far from being deceived by such misleading testimonies, we may only infer from this tea-pot that the dealer was wont to affix his name to all that passed through his hands, even upon such pieces as had been decorated abroad. This curious specimen is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The so-called Lowestoft style is characterised by sprays and garlands of flowers in which two peculiar pink and purple colours play a conspicuous part, and by scalloped borders of the scale or trellis patterns. Similar designs appear on the early china and earthenware of Staffordshire. The last partisans of the Chaffers' theory—for all the off-shoots of the mystification have not yet been fully eradicated—believe that such pieces afford irrefutable examples of the Lowestoft original production. This is an error that must be discarded with the others. To imitate Chinese decoration has always been the golden rule of the English potter; just as he had reproduced the fine Nankin porcelain, he also copied the quasi-European ware manufactured for exportation by the East India Company, and this all the more readily that it could be easily and cheaply produced. The well-known scale borders and the sprays of pink and purple roses occur frequently on the early china of Minton, Spode, and other makers. These designs were obviously taken from the Chinese importations, and did not originate

in the Potteries any more than they originated at Lowestoft.

From the few authenticated specimens that have come under the collector's notice, we gather that the paste of the genuine Lowestoft porcelain is coarse, semi-opaque, and of a dingy white; the glaze is speckled with bubbles and minute black spots, which denote a rather imperfect manufacture. It is poorly decorated, and under these conditions we understand that it was not preciously preserved in the households; at all events, it has now become very rare. No mark was ever used at the factory; and the specific character of the ware is not sufficiently pronounced to allow us to use such undoubted examples as we possess as a means of identifying those which may have escaped destruction.

STOKE-ON-TRENT.

SPODE.

ONE hundred years have gone since Josiah Spode, second of the name, breaking away from technical routine, composed a new china body which united the advantages of the soft and hard porcelain. From the nature of its chief constituent it received the vulgar name of "Bone China." Modern manufacturers scarcely seem to realize what they owe to the invention, and what gratitude they should entertain towards the inventor. His name could not occupy too high a place in the annals of the Staffordshire Potteries. Unlike so many improvements which, after having been acclaimed and adopted by all, live only long enough to be displaced by some other novelty, this evergreen "bone china" has remained unaltered ever since the first pieces of it came out of Spode's oven, and nothing indicates that it will be superseded for a long time to come.

It matters little whether Josiah Spode did or did not introduce for the first time the use of bone ashes in the composition of porcelain. As a matter of fact, the

PL. XIX. SPODE.

Vase in the Chinese Style.

V. & A. MUSEUM





refractory power of the phosphate of lime obtained from calcined bones had been known so far back in olden times that it is not possible to trace its first application to ceramic art. It might as well be said that china clay and felspar, the two other ingredients, had been employed before him in porcelain manufacture. This has, after all, little to do with the merit of an innovation which must be considered chiefly on its results to be adequately appreciated.

Particular stress must be laid on the fact that no china ware approaching in material constitution and external appearance the English "bone china" had ever been made before Spode contrived his new compound; the Chelsea and Derby pastes, in which bone ashes entered for a small part, did not lose, on that account, the character of a true soft china, and they belong unquestionably to this well-defined group. So widely did the new body differ from the old ones that it now forms an independent class in porcelain technology. Simple as the invention may appear—since it consisted in a novel combination of well-known materials—if we consider the revolution that its introduction effected in the conditions of English manufacture, we must admit that the importance of that invention and the credit due to him who brought it into practice, could never be overrated.

It was in the earthenware factory established at Stoke-on-Trent by his father, towards 1770, that Josiah

Spode the younger received his practical training. Under the tuition of such a consummate master of the art, he became a very clever potter at an early age, and took an effective share in the conduct of the work. After Mr. William Copeland, at first traveller and agent to the firm, had been taken into partnership, and a large warehouse for the direct sale of the ware had been opened in Lincoln's Inn Fields, young Spode spent a short time in London to be initiated, under the guidance of their partner, into the commercial part of the business. The death of his father obliged him to return to Stoke in 1797, when he assumed the general direction of the factory.

The works had already developed such importance that they were only second to those founded at Etruria by Josiah Wedgwood. Spode had closely followed the great potter in his forward progress, and kept apace with all the improvements he had introduced into the trade. But Josiah Wedgwood had never attempted the making of porcelain; it was reserved to the younger Spode to open this fresh field of manufacture.

I have stated, in another place, that Spode's biscuit was not liable to the many accidents which attended the firing of soft china, while his glaze was fusible enough to allow the colours to sink into it. The perfection of the paste was partly due to the presence of one particular factor which had not been used before, at least in that amended shape, to wit, a pure felspar obtained from

the china-stone chemically purged of all extraneous elements.

Superior as were the intrinsic qualities of the Staffordshire china, it could, nevertheless, be sold at a comparatively low price, the new method of manufacture having considerably reduced the cost of production. Worcester, Derby, Coalport, and other factories still working on the old notions, could no longer make a stand against a ruinous competition. Scarcely could they profit by the benefit of an advantageous comparison, for in point of whiteness of the paste, equality of translucency, and limpidity of glaze, Spode's china seemed to have at once reached the highest point in the way to perfectibility. On the score of fashioning and finish, the ware was absolutely faultless. The painting was always carefully and neatly executed; the gilding solid and rich. But with this our mead of praise comes to an end; it cannot be extended to the questionable taste exhibited in the decorative treatment. Efforts were made, no doubt, to keep the artistic value of the productions on a level with their technical excellence; but that aim was never attained. The adoption of a pseudo-classical style, which had been for Josiah Wedgwood a source of triumphant success, had a deplorable influence upon the whole of English ceramic art. And this is not to be wondered at. Wedgwood, in whose mighty personality the ability of a thorough business man was united to the lofty aspirations of a man of genius, took great care to associate to his labours

collaborators, modellers, and designers of exceptional talent. He had many followers; but they were all satisfied with treading in his steps at a respectful distance. While imitating the various kinds of ware he had so successfully produced, they do not seem to have suspected the importance of entrusting the leading part of the decorative work to special and truly clever artists.

An ordinary china painter could be turned at one moment into a chief designer; all that was asked from him was to extract out of the great works on Greek vases such designs of shapes and ornaments as might suit the taste of the day. It is obvious that, when applied to porcelain, the notions indiscriminately borrowed from antique ceramics, and awkwardly rendered by an incompetent hand, were bound to appear often out of place. For instance, the bell-shaped crater with convoluted handles so frequently repeated, looks none the better when completed with the view of an English castle or a group of flowers pencilled in the regular style of Staffordshire china painting. Neither is an ungainly dinner service rendered much more attractive by its border of palmettes or lines of egg-and-darts. If the scheme of decoration happened to leave the field of a classical monotony, it was to fall into a display of pitiable insignificance.

At all times the standard designs brought out by the chief English factories were extensively drawn upon. Chamberlain's and Bloor's patterns long remained an inexhaustible mine of inspiration for the decorators of

Spode china; one may say that the designs underwent frequent modifications, but they were never altogether discarded. The "Japan pattern" of late Derby, with its patchy combination of dark blue, scarlet, and gold, was a special favourite. The ware that was decorated at Spode's in that particular style outnumbers, by a long way, the aggregate of all the similar productions of all other places where it has had a run of success.

Blue printing under the glaze was one of the staple decorative processes at the Stoke factory; Spode had brought it to a high degree of excellence. Upon the "iron stone china," a white stoneware body of great density of substance, which he invented in 1805, the printed ornamentation shows a neatness of lines and a purity of blue unequalled upon any other ware.

Josiah Spode the second died in 1827, at the zenith of his fame and success. He was succeeded by a cousin the third Josiah Spode, who survived him but two years. The whole concern was then purchased by the remaining partner, Alderman W. T. Copeland. Under his enlightened and liberal direction, the works still developed further extension. Unflinching exertions were maintained from that moment to raise the artistic department to a high standard of superiority. Other writers have narrated the work accomplished in that, the best, period, of the history of Copeland's manufactory; it has ranked ever since on a par with the greatest ones in the kingdom. The ware is marked with various combinations of the full names, or initials, of Spode and Copeland.

STOKE - ON - TRENT.

THOMAS MINTON.

MINTON'S china and its well-spread reputation belong to modern times; this retrospective account has only to deal with its modest beginnings.

Thomas Minton, the founder of the factory, was born near Shrewsbury in 1765. When the time came for him to be apprenticed to a trade, his parents decided to place him as an engraver with Turner, of Caughley. From the original, but almost childish, practice of affixing a printed image upon the sides of a pot, transfer printing in fusible colours was just developing into a legitimate means of pottery decoration. Complete schemes of ornamentation, usually borrowed from the best Nankin porcelain, were designed with due consideration of the place they were to occupy on the ware, engraved in the most appropriate style, then transferred on the biscuit before glazing. These various operations had been so artfully practised that, after the firing, a piece decorated in that manner could hardly be distinguished from one painted by hand. This was obviously the process of the

future. Clever hands would be wanted and a painstaking apprentice could feel confident that the talent he might acquire would meet with condign reward. Impelled by the hopeful prospects, Thomas Minton worked so strenuously that at the end of his apprenticeship he had become the best ceramic engraver of the day. He remained with Turner for two years more. The plates that he engraved for him during that period are models of the kind. The run of success of some of the patterns—the “Broseley” among others—is not yet quite exhausted.

The keen desire he felt for improving an artistic education, necessarily imperfect, moved him into going to study in London for a year or two. There he supported himself by executing the commissions he received from the Staffordshire manufacturers. As his work became better known, the demand for it increased so rapidly that he was able to fix his own conditions and create for himself a very lucrative occupation. Josiah Spode, first of the name, had been his chief patron and employer. In order to be near his factory and enlarge his professional connection in the Potteries, young Minton left London, and came to settle in Stoke-upon-Trent.

He never signed his copper plates. It is, therefore, useless to expect that a complete list of them will ever be drawn up. It is to be regretted, for he was a spirited etcher, as well as a most precise line engraver. Judging from the exceptional merit of the few examples that

have come under our notice, we may feel sure that an interesting artistic personality would be evolved from a critical examination of his whole work. Let us remark, by the bye, that if fame in ceramic history is to be won by the craftsman whose work has passed, with almost unabated success, through a hundred and more years of incessant reproduction, the name of Thomas Minton has an imprescriptible right to be remembered in connection with the engraving of the universally popular "Willow Pattern plate."

In these halcyon days of pot-making in Staffordshire—when the young engraver was placing his talent at the service of the trade—that an active and intelligent man, living in constant touch with the manufacturers of the district, should become a potter in his turn, was a foregone conclusion. The surroundings were singularly suited to promote the facile development of a captivating and remunerative industry. Clay and coal were lying, so to speak, at the surface of the soil, and cost little more than the trouble of shovelling them up and carrying them off. Labour was to be had at a low rate; trained hands were obtainable in plenty. Commercial transactions were firmly established on the home market, and the Mersey Canal offered a convenient outlet to an important trade of exportation.

Thomas Minton had realised all this when he resolved to try his hand at pottery manufacture. In 1793—he was then twenty-eight years of age—he bought a plot of land

MINTON (THOMAS).

No. 70. Vase in the Derby Style.

J. F. CAMPBELL COLLECTION





and began to prepare his line of action with the quiet circumspection which always tempered the exertion of his business activity. A single biscuit oven and the few indispensable working sheds were at first to be erected; yet the small establishment was not ready before 1796. The men who were to assist him in the carrying on of the work were selected with great care. He did not consider himself yet competent to manage the details of fabrication. The brothers Poulson had a little pot-works over the way. They were good, practical potters, but through sheer lack of business capability they had never been able to rise above the precarious conditions in which they had started; he made them his managers. Joseph Poulson, the elder, showed himself so useful in that capacity that he soon became a partner. At his death, in 1803, he was succeeded by another clever man, John Turner, brother to the celebrated William Turner, of Lane End. More capital being required for the extension of the business, it was supplied by Mr. Pownell, a Liverpool merchant, whose connection with the firm lasted until 1808.

Owing to his Caughley experience, T. Minton was no stranger to the making of porcelain; it was added to the works in 1798. The processes of manufacture were then in a state of transition. The early soft china, with the granulated fracture, was nearly abandoned, being too costly and unreliable to produce. An attempt had lately been made, at New Hall, to replace it with a porcelain

of hard and compact texture, but the results it had given were too unsatisfactory to lead to its general adoption. Attention was just then turned towards the composition of a new body, in which china clay and stone—the use of which had been thrown open to all through the expiration of Champion's patent—were to be combined with a large percentage of bone ashes. So far the Cornish materials had had to be purchased at extortionate prices from the New Hall Company. In order to protect himself against the consequences of any eventual monopoly, and secure a cheap and steady supply of china clay, Thomas Minton undertook a journey to Cornwall in 1798. There he purchased an estate on the Hendra Common, and also an interest in the minerals abundantly found on the adjoining land. On his return, he assigned, against substantial compensation, the private rights he had just acquired to a syndicate of Potteries manufacturers constituted to carry on the working of the mines.

As a china maker, Thomas Minton did not achieve any of those discoveries or striking improvements with which the name of an innovator remains associated for ever after. His first porcelain was of the hybrid New Hall type; the latter one, compared with that perfected by J. Spode towards 1800—which he obviously imitated and often equalled—only shows a fixed determination on his part not to be distanced by the best maker of his time. Neither did his artistic training influence for the better the style of decoration of his ware, limited to small

ornaments and articles of domestic use. It does not depart in any way from the deplorable taste in vogue at the period. The ungainly shapes are a mere degeneration of the late Dresden models; they are showily scrolled with flat gilding, and sprinkled with common-looking roses and pansies; the most pretentious pieces being painted with the habitual landscape.

No important vases or graceful figures were ever attempted. It must not be forgotten that the making of porcelain—at Minton's, as well as in the other Staffordshire factories—was but a minor auxiliary to the manufacture of earthenware, to which the manufacturer devoted the larger share of attention; any out-of-the-way and costly production would have met with no reward.

A marked amelioration followed the engagement of some good china painters who, in 1825, had had to leave the Derby works, then on the point of being closed. The Crown Derby patterns, and those of Worcester (Chamberlain) were reproduced, and imitations of the Sèvres porcelain executed with special care and ability. The fashionable taste had shifted from Dresden to Sèvres. There was a great demand for the latter; the market was full of spurious ware, all bearing the well-known mark. It is a matter of regret to have to say that Thomas Minton—yielding probably to the London dealers' exigencies—used the crossed LL of Sèvres, to

which, as a secret means of identification, he added a small M.

It would seem that all china manufacturers were particularly mindful at that moment to avoid introducing anything that might savour of novelty. Not only did they copy foreign designs, but they tried to imitate one another in their rather free interpretation of the originals. The consequence was that the aggregate is so deficient in individual character that, in the absence of a mark, a Minton piece, for instance, can scarcely be discriminated from the rest of contemporary productions. Good taste, true refinement, and elegance had become negligeable quantities. To make a good china body and drive a paying business were the all-absorbing considerations of the times; and it must be acknowledged that by adhering to this matter-of-fact doctrine the Staffordshire china-makers succeeded in establishing sound, profitable, and long-lived businesses.

At the end of his career, the humble pot-works which had satisfied Thomas Minton's early ambition had developed into an extensive and well-equipped manufactory; it took rank among the most important of the district. Herbert Minton, the second son, born at Stoke in 1792, was from the age of fourteen associated in his father's labours; at sixteen he was travelling for the firm, and he was made a partner at twenty-five.

Thomas Minton died in 1836, leaving his son Herbert in possession of a thriving and promising

concern. It could not have fallen into better hands. Under his management the grand days of Minton's Works may be said to have begun.

To conclude this introductory chapter with a few hurried words reviewing the remaining part of the history, would not be fair either to the memory of Thomas Minton's successors or to the work they have accomplished, especially in what concerns the important part they have played under the direction of C. Minton Campbell in the revival of industrial art in England. When the task is undertaken to bring the account up to the present day, it must be done with the recognition, the completeness, and the impartiality that it deserves.



MARK.

LONGPORT (STAFFORDSHIRE).

DAVENPORT.

I FIND no record of the precise date at which John Davenport added to the manufacture of earthenware, in which he was engaged at Longport, near Burslem, in 1793, that of the bone porcelain. His name, however, stood conspicuously before the public as a porcelain manufacturer in the first years of the nineteenth century. The works had already been honoured by the visit of royal personages when he received an order for a sumptuous dinner service to be used at the coronation banquet of King William IV.

The ware, of which a large quantity is still in existence, is generally marked with the name of the firm in full. But for the mark it could not be distinguished from the Spode and Thomas Minton porcelain of the same period. The ever-recurring patterns of Sèvres and Derby do duty once more on the Davenport productions; no name of any painter or modeller of particular merit has ever been mentioned in connection with them. From an artistic point of view, little is found in the best specimens that may be unconditionally commended.

DAVENPORT.

No. 71.—Cup and Saucer, with bright
green ground.

SCHREIBER COLLECTION.





It is as a successful man of business that John Davenport made his mark in the pottery trade. He was the first to employ female labour in the decorating workshops. The pecuniary profits he derived from the commercial connection he established with Europe and America for the sale of his earthenware and china are said to have exceeded those made by any other firm. He died a very wealthy man in 1848.

The Longport works do not exist any more. While the Staffordshire manufacturers strove to surpass one another in the way of improvements, the successors of John Davenport seem to have done very little to arrest a gradual decline, which ended in 1886 in the closing of the factory.

ETRURIA (STAFFORDSHIRE).

WEDGWOOD.

THE mark WEDGWOOD, usually stencilled in red or blue over the glaze, appears on some specimens of bone china, no better or worse than the average china made in Staffordshire at a corresponding period. These specimens, now rather uncommon, represent the porcelain experimentally manufactured at Etruria towards 1805 by Thomas Byerley, a nephew of the great Josiah, then in charge of the practical direction of the works.

Nothing in the shapes and decorations recalls the classical style and refinement of the old Wedgwood ware. Produced merely as a competition to a new branch of the trade in which the rival manufacturers were achieving an enviable success, the Byerley porcelain never aimed at anything better than a close imitation of the Spode and Minton patterns. The venture did not prove remunerative; it was abandoned after a few years of spiritless trials.

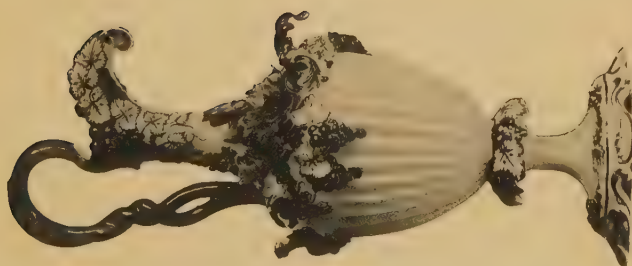
ROCKINGHAM.

No. 72.—Ewer-shaped Vase, with raised flowers.

No. 73.—Octagonal Plate, decorated in red and green.

No. 74.—Cake Basket, with the Griffin mark.

E. M. KIDD COLLECTION



ROCKINGHAM.

AT Swinton, a Yorkshire village situated at a short distance from Rotherham, busy little pot-works had existed during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and had gained some celebrity for their brown tea and coffee ware. The modest brown tea-pot was the forerunner of perhaps the most gaudy and ostentatious porcelain ever made in England. Through the reflected sheen of the fame these works enjoyed at one moment the now half-forgotten name of Swinton might have become memorable; but out of compliment to a noble patron, Charles, Marquis of Rockingham, on whose estate the factory was situated, the productions were always called "Rockingham" and not "Swinton" ware.

In 1820 Thomas Brameld, one of the proprietors, was managing the prosperous pottery. As far as we can judge from the records of his life and work, Brameld was a capable potter, an ambitious and energetic man. Like most of the enterprising pot-makers of his day, he was longing for an opportunity of embarking into the manufacture of porcelain, confident of raising himself by these means to a high position at the head of the trade.

Professional secrets were things of the past. The composition of an admirable bone china had scarcely been fixed than it had become public property. Having experimented upon the various recipes he had obtained, probably from Staffordshire, the Swinton potter succeeded in bringing body and glaze to the highest degree of perfection. All that pertained to the technical ways and means was definitely settled towards 1823; and at that time a porcelain of excellent quality began to be regularly manufactured.

But a man of Brameld's stamp of mind could not rest satisfied with ordinary results; his ambition was to surpass all that was being done by his contemporaries. In his impatience to reach that end he went ahead too speedily, forgetting the dictates of prudence. After three years of reckless expenditure the capital had been spent in auspicious preparations, but no retributive returns had been obtained. Affairs had come to a standstill; he was compelled to call a meeting of his creditors in 1825, and try to come to some arrangement with them that might save the situation.

Earl Fitzwilliam, Marquis of Rockingham, who had patronized the venture from the outset, was deeply involved in the losses. Nevertheless, he could see that if the financial position was momentarily compromised, the prospects had not ceased to be encouraging from the manufacturing point of view. Far from harbouring any doubt as to a forthcoming success, he confidently promised

to supply as much money as was needed to get through the passing crisis, and undertook to take an active part himself in the management of the business.

Brameld was, of course, retained as practical director. No longer hampered by pecuniary considerations, he launched at once into broad schemes of extension and improvements. Not that there was anything to improve in the quality of his porcelain, which was second to none, but he was impressed with the necessity of enlisting the assistance of the best painters and modellers that could be procured. To accomplish that purpose, he was resolved to spare neither trouble nor expense. It was not his fault if only mediocre talent was then available. Through the decline of the trade the scale of wages had been so much reduced that no artist of any ability would have, under existing circumstances, followed the thankless avocation of a china painter. The factories' painting shops still turned out a small quantum of apprentices, trained in stippling, more or less neatly, traditional groups of stiff flowers and fruits, awkward figures, and vulgar landscapes, but absolutely bereft of the most elementary notions of design, colour, and decorative effects. With no better auxiliaries at his command than those which he selected from among the best hands in the current trade, Brameld could not produce anything really fine and artistic; what was left for him to do was to make the work look gorgeous and costly.

Exceptional vases were designed of a size unattempted

before in any English factory. Painting and gilding were lavished on their decoration with nothing short of extravagance. When exhibited in London they took everybody by surprise; no ornamental china could be called to mind that approached their sensational magnificence. In the writings of the times, the Rockingham vases are referred to as unequalled masterpieces of the ceramic art.

“That splendid Vase no vulgar hand design’d,
Its fabricks shews th’ inventive master mind . . .”

Thus John Ward begins a laudatory description of a special piece in his poem of “The Potter’s Art.” The poetical strains of the bard are all along in keeping with the artistic style of the object he glorifies.

This particular vase is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It measures 3 ft. 9 ins. in height; it has a perforated neck and handles formed of gilt oak leaves, massive enough to imitate an “ormolu” mount. The principal subjects, painted by J. W. Brameld, brother to the manager, represent scenes from the history of Don Quixote; they are supplemented with medallions of landscapes and birds, flowers and scrolls, distributed upon all available space, including the inside of the cover. The form is supported by three huge lion’s claws, and surmounted by a rhinoceros. This nonsensical agglomeration, the ideal of the potter of the period, is

Vase of exceptional size.

V. & A. MUSEUM



of well-finished execution, but, needless to say, of a deplorable taste.

Another vase, also over three feet in height, was once in the possession of Dr. Brameld. From the handles being made of two rather tame-looking dragons it had received the name of "the infernal vase."

Expensive dessert services, elaborately gilt and painted with landscapes and still-life subjects, became the speciality of the Rockingham works. The Duchess of Cumberland had one made, for which she paid two hundred and fifty guineas; and the Duke of Sussex ordered one which cost eight hundred and fifty guineas. Others were supplied to the King of Hanover, the King of the Belgians, and many noblemen in England and abroad.

It was after the completion of King William IV.'s dessert service that the factory assumed the title of "Royal Rockingham Works." This service was painted by J. W. Brameld with the Royal arms, views of English castles, and landscape scenery. The price of £5,000 which was paid for it is said to have scarcely covered its actual cost to the manufacturers. It was used for the first time on the coronation of Queen Victoria, and is now preserved in Buckingham Palace.

The Rockingham porcelain, always of excellent manufacture, is well represented in the chief collections. To the usual run of ornamental and useful articles must be added the biscuit statuettes executed in the Derby

style. Among them may be mentioned a bust of Earl Fitzwilliam modelled by W. Eley, and Chantrey's full-length figure of Lady Russell.

In 1842 the factory was in full decline. Earl Fitzwilliam, who had continued his patronage and financial support since 1826, felt himself unable to bear any longer the constant calls made upon his liberality; he ordered the works to be closed, and caused the business to be wound up. It ended in a heavy loss for himself and all interested parties. The modest Rockingham brown teapots, which are still enjoying great popularity, had proved, after all, more remunerative to the makers than ostentatious china.

A griffin, the Rockingham crest, was the mark adopted by the porcelain works. It is either impressed or painted in red, and sometimes accompanied by a royal crown or the words Rockingham Works and Brameld in various forms.

L. Jewitt has been at some trouble to gather particulars about the Rockingham Works. The result of his investigations has been related in his work, *The Ceramic Art of Great Britain*.

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